

THE
WIERD WANDERER
OF
JUTLAND.

A TRAGEDY.

JULIA MONTALBAN.

A TALE.

BY
THE HON. AND REV. WILLIAM HERBERT.

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DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

**THE WIERD WANDERER OF JUTLAND, a Tragedy,
JULIA MONTALBAN,
PIA DELLA PIETRA, and
HEDIN, form one Volume.**

Place the general Title Page before the **TALES.**

Shortly will be Published,

THE GUAMIBA, a Tale, which may be added to the above.

THE

WIERD WANDERER OF JUTLAND.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SWENO.

UBALD.

REYNALD.

KNIGHTS,

Guests, Messengers, and Attendants.

BERTHA.

AGNES.

THE WANDERER.

SCENE *in Jutland—SWENO'S Castle and its vicinity.*

TIME, *about 30 hours.*



THE
WIERD WANDERER
OF
JUTLAND.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Sweno's Hall; a Banquet.*

**SWENO, UBALD, REYNALD, BERTHA, AGNES,
*Knights, Ladies, and Attendants.***

SWENO.

Sir, lords, and be the draught of pleasure fill'd
E'en to the goblet's brink! We bid you welcome.
And thou, dear lady, whose hand lock'd in mine,
As on this day, twenty blithe years have witness'd,
We pledge thee in this brimming cup of love. 5

GUESTS, (*drinking.*)

Health and long life to Sweno and his dame!

BERTHA.

Thanks, gentles, for this courtesy.

SWENO.

My Bertha,

Time has sped well with us. Our lovely hostess
Wears yet the hue of freshness unalloy'd,
While her ripe scion, our sweet Agnes, glows 10
With beauty's blush, like a new beam of morning.
We lack not aught, wherewith to tax the fates
As niggards of their gifts, being doubly blest
In our loved daughter and adopted son.
Ubald, thy prowess in each listed field 15
Speaks no mean lineage. As my child I greet thee.

UBALD.

If to revere you as man's noblest type,
To love you as my worthier self, to prize
The far-famed honors of your noble house

As things most dear, which from ill chance to shield, 20
I would encounter danger in such shapes
As human daring may but ill assay,
Be a son's duty, it is freely paid,
And Ubald still the debtor. Good my lord,
Your kindness makes me bankrupt of all thanks, 25
Save the poor service of a faithful arm
To ward your rights.

SWENO.

And we dare trust it, Ubald,
Though half our honors hung on the event.
To-morrow, sirs, it is our mind to hold
A gorgeous tournament, and, by my knighthood, 30
Who wins hath leave to be our daughter's suitor.
Good Reynald, is thy lance as keen and strong,
As when it tumbled the grim Saracen,
Horseman and horse, tilting in Palestine?

REYNALD.

Ay, noble Sweno; and a lovelier prize 35

Makes not the hand more sluggard in the charge.

I pledge my glove to win.

SWENO.

Take it, young Ubald,

And may all guardian saints to-morrow speed thee!

So in the tilt thou dost approve thee victor,

Loud proclamation shall our heralds make 40

To all who dare impugn thy long-lost birthright;

And, if none answer to that bold appeal,

Valiant we know thee, and shall hold thee noble.

UBALD.

Ay, marry will I. If he cast his gauntlet,

And this arm thrust him from his saddle-bow, 45

By heaven and good Saint Olaf, he shall eat it,

As that huge dragon, which he slew in Syria,

Would have gulp'd up the princess of —

Plague on it!

I cannot scan the name of half those regions

Whence he has scared the devil and his imps. 50

REYNALD, (*rising.*)

Sweno, I was bred in war, and learnt the laws
Of knightly courtesy which arrests mine anger.
I know both what is due to host and guests;
Nor-would I stain thy social board with blood
E'en of one chattering pie; else, taunting youth, 55
I well remember, how in Holy Land,
When a base renegade provoked my scorn
By some light speech, I slew the turban'd caitif
With his own rapier.

UBALD.

And made his bare skull
A bonnet for thy mistress.

SWENO.

Peace, peace, Ubald. 60
Let us have music. Friends, the merry Bacchus
Brims not your flowing cups with wonted glee.
Agnes, we tax thy sweet voice for a song.

Music.

AGNES *sings.*

I.

With a turf at her feet,
In her winding-sheet, 65
Shall Elfrid lie where the wild winds howl;
But the deathless shame
Of her lost, lost, fame,
Shall weigh like a stone on the fair one's soul.

II.

There's a curse above 70
Upon faithless love,
Can turn the morning's ray to dead midnight;
There's a secret voice,
When false lords rejoice,
Can change to dark anguish their soul's delight.

III.

The curse shall cling
To the bridal ring
Of the faithless lord who left her to mourn;
An angel in the sky
Has graven it on high 80
On a scroll of fire that can ne'er be torn.

IV.

His bride is gay,
And his children play,
While Elfrid lies where the wild winds roar;
The fiend has set his mark 85
On their heads dark, dark,
And the spirit of vengeance is near his door.

(*While she is singing, SWENO appears strangely agitated, and interrupts her when she has just uttered the word vengeance.*)

SWENO.

'Tis a fiend's song. Where gat you that foul strain,
Crossing our mirth with such portentous sounds,
As if the deep could send the unshrouded dead 90
To scare us from our joys?

AGNES.

Father, it bodes not
Evil to us; a wild lay, long since learnt
From a wierd woman that craved alms: the notes
So sweetly rung in mine attentive ear,
Time has not robb'd me of their melody. 95

*(Thunder and lightning, which had begun faintly
while she was singing, becomes loud and bright,
with noise of violent rain. The agitation of
SWENO increases.)*

SWENO.

The heavens frown on this our festival.
'Tis passing strange, that sounds of such dire omen
Should break upon our wassail; quelling the pulse

Of high-born mirth; turning the cheek of joy
To very paleness. Daughter, thy sad notes 100
Breathe an infectious gloom, and our kind guests
Have miss'd the scope of that sweet mirth we wish'd
them. (*Rising.*)

The tempest waxes, and this ancient castle
Rocks with the blast. May the sun's kindlier beam
Smile on our pomp to-morrow. I crave your leave. 105
Health and light thoughts attend our welcome friends.

[*Exeunt* SWENO, UBALD, BERTHA, AGNES and
others. *Manent* REYNALD and two other
Knights.]

REYNALD.

Great heaven! is this the man, whose mighty name
Is blown to the four corners of Christ's empire,
Famed for stern valor, marshalling in war
With proud array his feudatory swords 110
Like a half-king in Jutland! To be thus moved!

FIRST KNIGHT.

'Tis the distemper of his inward nature.

The subtle fluid of that flaming mischief
Which gives the thunder voice, steals to his heart
With secret sickness, curdling all the blood 115
Till his flesh creeps.

SECOND KNIGHT.

Ay; ever since that morn,
Which to his wedded couch gave noble Bertha.

FIRST KNIGHT.

'Twas a rough morn. The curse of that fair maid,
Who perish'd in the flood, hath ever since
Weigh'd like a stone on his distemper'd soul. 120

SECOND KNIGHT.

By heaven, methinks, when piping winds do blow,
Her form is manifest to his estranged eye,
As when she stood on the rock's slippery verge
That morn by Helen's chapel.

REYNALD.

Sirs, to me
Your words speak riddles.

SECOND KNIGHT.

Heard you ne'er the tale? 125

'Tis twenty years by-gone, as on this morn,
Since Sweno led, with pomp and bravery
Of princely cost, his bride unto the altar
In Helen's chapel, built on the beetling rock
Over the torrent, when Saint Mary's church 130
Lay under the Pope's ban, for a foul murder
Done in the very aisle while mass was singing.

REYNALD.

I have mark'd its site, a wild romantic spot;
And its high tower a goodly structure, now
Half ruinous: 'tis said that evil spirits 135
Shriek oft at night within its lonesome walls.

SECOND KNIGHT.

'Tis like they may; it hath been long disused,
A darksome fabric now, and the bleak winds
Howl through its broken casements.

FIRST KNIGHT.

But that morn

Of blazing tapers there was cost enough. 140

SECOND KNIGHT.

'Twas a gay pomp ; but, as the nuptial train,
Advancing, near'd that huge o'er-shelving rock
Fast by the stream, the shrill winds mustering stirr'd
With such fierce outrage, that each flag was rent,
And the thick clouds seem'd big with lowering
tempest. 145

When, as they 'gan ascend, a form above
Stood with dishevell'd hair, that stream'd upon
The blustering gale. It was the loveliest shape,
My eyes ere then or since have witness'd ; pale
As the chaste moon, and sad as sorrow's statue : 150
But a wild fierceness lighten'd from her looks,
As, with one hand out-stretch'd, she gave her words
To the rude blast of heaven. I heard them not
With clear precision render'd to mine ear,

But it was bruited, that on princely Sweno 155
And all his race she breathed a deadly curse,
Summoning them to the dread throne of judgment.

REYNALD.

Whence and who was she?

SECOND KNIGHT.

It was never known;
She vanish'd like a wraith; but on a bough,
Which overhung the swoln stream's eddying foam, 160
Her mantle was found, drench'd by the angry flood;
And 'tis past doubt, she perish'd in the waters,
Which roar'd that night, as they would burst their
bed.

REYNALD.

How fared the bridal?

SECOND KNIGHT.

Sad as a death-wake.
The bridegroom rapt in care, like one distraught 165
By some dark agony; his lovely bride

Trembling and ashy pale : and all the while
The thunder raved with such rebounding roar,
That the roof quaked, and the blue lightning's blaze
Made every face like a gaunt spectre glare. 170

FIRST KNIGHT.

Ne'er has good Sweno, since that ominous morn,
Held the mind's peaceful tenor. When winds roar,
And the hoarse thunder makes the welkin tremble,
His heart seems touch'd as by some icy hand,
Shrivelling its core; and some deep cankering wound,
That preys within his soul, bleeds fresh and green.

REYNALD.

'Tis past belief, in one, whose actions swell
Fame's chronicle, far-told ; filling the ear
Of expectation with amazing deeds ;
Lending new lustre to renowned war. 180

FIRST KNIGHT.

There doth not breathe a more undaunted knight
Than this same Sweno, saving that touch of weakness,

Unless it be yon flower of chivalry,
All conquering Ubald, fame and fortune's minion.

REYNALD.

Whence sprung that fiery youth, whose haughty eye
Lords o'er this court, as if created man
Was form'd for him, not he to yield man service;
So confident, and reckless?

SECOND KNIGHT.

Faith I know not.

The lady Bertha found him, a weak infant,
Cradled midst roses and all summer sweets 190
In that fair chamber, now young Agnes' bower,
Fast by the blooming garden. The strange elf,
Lapt in ~~deep~~ slumber, smiled, and waking stretch'd
Its little arms as if imploring kindness;
And she, just risen from a matron's throes, 195
To pitying love by that endearment moved,
Kiss'd its chill'd lips that ask'd the milk of nature,
And on her beauteous bosom bade it hush.

Protection first, then favor he obtain'd,
Waxing in years, and worth, and valor; proud 200
As if from kingly blood, hot as a lion,
And mastering all spirits by his strength,
The people's darling, and the bolt of battle.

FIRST KNIGHT.

Saving your prowess, I would pawn my sword
He wins to-morrow: for of Denmark's knights 205
There lives not one can stand this Ubald's onset.

REYNALD.

Is it thus? Yet shall he find one shaft too doughty,
Tried oft at Acre and at Ascalon,
Which hath beat down the brunt of Mahound's chief-
tains,
Though arm'd with spells of Paynim sorcery. 210

FIRST KNIGHT.

God speed you, sir! 'Twill be no mean encounter
Shall steep his crest to-morrow.

SECOND KNIGHT.

Till then, Reynald,
Let us be joyous, and with some free cheer
Kill lagging time.

REYNALD.

E'en so; we have seen no spectres;
And yet methinks all heaven's blasts are stirring, 215
And its rent bosom seems one sheet of flame.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*A Grove in the Garden before the Castle, which is seen
through the trees. The storm is abating.*

THE WIERD WANDERER (*alone.*)

Hist! hist! \ Wild striving elements, be still,
Ominous and still, as brooding mischief is!
When the fell draft of vengeance shall be quaff'd
E'en to its bloody dregs, then, then laugh out, 220

Thou damned spirit of the storm! Foul fiend,
Hast thou so many years of loneliness,
Whispering revenge, still borne me fellowship,
And now, when fate's retributory curse
Draws nigh to the achievement, canst thou not wait 225
For hellish joy, till the full spell be woven?
Hist! hist! and thou, bright sun, shine forth in glory,
Until the moment of appointed justice!
The day has been, when I could ill have bided
The pitiless tempest and that strife of nature; 230
But sold to fiends, I dread not now their workings,
Lost in despair, and reft of every gift
That makes life joyous—Hark! 'Tis Sweno's voice!
The morn shall not dawn twice, ere thou be summon'd
To thy doom! life for life!—Away! away! 235

[*Exit.*

[*Enter from the Castle, SWENO, BERTHA.*]

SWENO.

The bolts have spent their fire; yon lurid cloud

Still, and disburthen'd of its teeming wrath,
Hangs like a misty shroud on the horizon.
The air is calm ; Bertha, I breathe more freely.

BERTHA.

Nay, good my lord, I needs must hold it strange 240
E'en to the natural temper of your soul,
That you, so far removed from taint of fear,
Instant in danger, firm in resolution,
Should start, thus from yourself estranged and wild,
At these rude flaws of nature, making 245
Unkind divorce between your alter'd thoughts
And that sweet peace they owe you.

SWENO.

O loved Bertha,
There be some thoughts too deep for time to medicine,
Which on the seemliest and freshest cheek
Would stamp dread's livery, though the heart were
steel.

BERTHA.

What thoughts? strange roamings of the troubled
fancy,

Air-blown imagination's empty bubble!

For shame, my lord; this is the bodiless spectre

Of that poor maniac, whose ill-omen'd vision

Comes, like the shadow of a passing cloud, 255

O'er the bright mirror of your better judgment.

Fie on't, a dream.

SWENO.

Would that it were a dream,

That I could shake the wrathful spectre from me!

The curse of that dread hour will live for ever.

Call Agnes forth: I have a fearful thought, 260

Some secret evil overhangs my child.

Perchance her sight may soothe me.

BERTHA.

Be more cheerly;

Sweno, our guests attend us.

[*Exit* BERTHA.]

SWENO (*alone.*)

Vengeful fate,

Dost thou indeed pursue me! Will not years
Atone for one offence! Last night methought 265
A voice as from my father's tomb cried, "Sweno,
"Thine hour is come! the curse is o'er thine house!"
To-day, as I approach'd the festive hall,
That flaming cherub seem'd to bar my passage,
Which in my life's most prosperous hours of pride, 270
A dreadful vision, oft has cross'd my path.

[*Enter AGNES.*]

SWENO, (*embracing her.*)

Ever beloved, forefend thee, gracious heaven!
Thy father's heart is sad.

AGNES.

My honor'd sire,

This is the very breathing hour of bliss;
The storm is roll'd away, and merry birds 275
Do trick their plumes, and sing their cheerful welcome
To the mild beam of evening.

SWENO.

The heart of youth
Is ever blithe and buoyant.

AGNES.

Good my father,
To-day my wayward strain offended you.
Shall I sing one, which oft has sooth'd your fancy 280
In the slow hours of sickness? Much you praised
Its melody, and somewhat the poor skill
That gave it voice.

SWENO.

No, not a song, my Agnes.
Music itself is out of tune to-day;
Thy gladsoonest notes would fall upon my ear 285
E'en as a passing knell.

AGNES.

Yet is this day
Held festive in our annals, chief for me
And my loved father.

SWENO.

Beshrew me, noble maid,
If thou shalt lack the joys that well beseem
Thy spring of life. The heyday of my blood 290
Is chill'd by the mind's winter; nature wears not
That bland aspect, which to the eye of youth
Shows all her forms in pleasant colors deck'd.
Thou shalt not miss delights or princely state,
While Sweno girds a sword.

AGNES.

I lack no joys 295
In thy kind presence: from thy brow to chase
The gloom, to sing to thee my playful ditties
Winning thy lips to smile, and in thine eyes
To read a father's blessing, these are joys
Enough for Agnes; nor of gayer sports 300
Is the voice hush'd in bounteous Sweno's palace.

[Enter UBALD.]

SWENO.

How fare our guests?

UBALD.

Sweno, we miss thy presence.

Upon my troth thou hast a royal guest!

That knight drinks deep, but yet his boastful speech
Shames his poor draught.

SWENO.

The noble Reynald, Ubald? 305

UBALD.

Ay, he from Palestine. O I could pluck the beard
Of such a vaunter! Pshaw! it moves my spleen
To see a comely knight and stout withal
First praise his wine, then praise himself more largely,
Still giving birth to some amazing tale 310
Between the cup and lip. Why, sir, this man
Kills you more sultans with each draught he quaffs
Than there be signs in the bright zodiac.—Arthur,
And he who slew the dragon, hight Saint George,
Were puny champions! Agnes, this proud gallant 315
Will purge all Heathendom, and place his bride

Upon the top-stone of Jerusalem.

A murrain on such talkers !

SWENO.

Thy blood, Ubald,

Knows no controul. Reynald stands well esteem'd,

And many a hard field has he fought beside 320

England's bold lion Richard.

UBALD.

Ay, so he has ;

And mown the heads of Paynim sorcerers

As boys slay poppies. So it stands recorded

Even on the faith of his own boastful speech.

Ubald must vail his crest to such high worth. 325

(taking off his helmet, and walking impatiently.)

SWENO.

Rein thy rash temper. Something bodes within me

That evil hangs over the house of Sweno ;

Perchance from thy quick passion. O my daughter,

If this thy haubrain'd playmate should be victor,

Thou wilt have a wild bridegroom.

UBALD.

O good sir, 330

I am rejected, scorn'd! I have not taken
A soldan by the beard in Ascalon.

SWENO.

God speed thee, boy. Time was the riotous blood
So kindled in my veins; but now the frost
Of years steals o'er my pride. No son of mine 335
Shall reap my ample honors; when I fall,
My house is lonely. Ubald, it needs a prop,
And who shall take this guerdon from my hand
With her rich heritage, must stand approved
In feat of arms unrivall'd.

UBALD.

Princely Sweno, 340

Forgive the hasty and impatient spirit
Which boils within me. Whom have I on earth
But thee, my more than father? Witness heaven,
If Ubald harbours in his ardent soul
One wish, but to be worthy thee and thine! 345

SWENO.

And so perchance thou art. That lofty temper
Which gleams from out thy soul, shows some high
birthright,

Though unreveal'd.—Agnes, we tarry long.

[Exeunt.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE—*A Grove of Ancient Trees with a View of
the Castle. A fine Evening after the Storm.*

THE WANDERER, (*alone.*)

The storm is hush'd; the turmoil'd elements slumber,
And the fierce gale, which rock'd those battlements, 350
Is lull'd and motionless. Meek Nature now,
Her fitful passion o'er, sleeps like an infant,
A playful smile bedewing its moist lips
As its eye sinks in stillness.—There is pleasure
In the calm aspect of the firmament 355
E'en when the mind is phrensied. The gaunt wretch,
Midst hideous shapes that haunt his fever'd couch,
•Blesses the day-breeze, and the soothing light
That beams from the blue heaven. How sweet the
breath

Of this mild evening! It steals over me 360
With thoughts that have been long foregone. O

Nature,

Parent of our best joys, how have I scared thee!
Through what terrific mazes has the fiend
Led my despairing steps! These aged trees
Spread their green honors to the sun that gilds them 365
In beauty yet unblighted, as when first
I trod their shade in youth: but vengeful thoughts
Have prey'd upon my vitals; they have gnaw'd
Like the foul worm in secret, till this form,
Once ripe with loveliness, has grown a curse, 370
A thing for wolves to bay, man's scorn and terror.

(Starting with a look of derangement.)

Hark, hark! It is my mother's shriek! I hear it;
I hear it now: the sob, the frantic laugh
Of my dead parent! They say the devil laughs,
When murder is doing. Mother! Mother! look up!
Know'st thou not me, thine own, thy blighted child?

'Twas thus when she was dying; she knew me not,
Her strange eye fixt upon the vacant air!

(Starting again.)

Hark to that shriek again!—Unquiet spirit,
Hush! hush!—Vengeance is dark and silent; slow, 380
But certain as the shaft of destiny.
Here, like death's messenger, I yield my being
To the achievement of that fearful vision,
Perpetual inmate of my burning thoughts,
By day my agony, the bitter dream 385
Of my distemper'd nights.

[Enter AGNES and UBALD.]

See, where they come,
Two heedless fowls, into the net of fate!
Be still, weak heart! Hush. Hush.

*(She withdraws, and conceals herself in the hollow
trunk of an old tree.)*

AGNES.

The evening star,

They say, is love's sweet harbinger. How its beam,
Ere yet the sun has ta'en his last farewell, 390
With every pleasant omen bids us welcome!
After her boisterous throes Nature smiles on us.
See, how each dewy flower is wreath'd with pearls!
The sun all-radiant is with glory passing
To his bright chamber. Seems it not so, love? 395

UBALD.

O Agnes, all my thoughts are full of joy ;
And the hot blood so tingles in my veins,
Methinks I could outstrip his lazy course,
Unto his orient palaces, and drag
Star-throned Dominion from her seat in heaven. 400

AGNES.

O rash in valour, as in love most wild!

UBALD.

Nay, Agnes, on my troth I love thee soother
Than the sick miser loves his hoarded pelf,
Than the fat burgher his wine-mantled cup,

Cowards their lives, sleek hypocrites their lies. 405
I' faith, sweet lass, thou think'st I love thee well.

AGNES.

Thou art a saucy knave to say me thus.

UBALD, (*playfully*.)

Think'st thou, my Agnes, if love's hope were granted,
Hymen his torch just lighting, all joys ready
And fit appliances of blissful state, 410
The bridal deck'd, chambers with perfume breathing,
That my fond grasp would cling to this soft palm
(*taking her hand*)

As its best treasure?

AGNES.

Faith, it need not call
The tell-tale blushes to a virgin's cheek,
To cry thee, ay.

UBALD, (*laughing*).

Yet on my word I would not; 415
So I must creep inglorious to thy couch,

As the worm seeks its mate. My Agnes' husband
Must be enshrined in the full blaze of glory.

O I will place thee in such eminence,
That men shall bow, women miss their proud looks, 420
And all cry hail, as to the sun of nature!

AGNES.

Ah me! thou art a truant to true love.
'Twas ever thus; Agnes hath scarce a part
In the impetuous yearnings of thy fancy.
There is some charm, some ill-devised spell, 425
That binds me closer to thy wayward soul,
Else would I (*she hesitates*).

UBALD, (*smiling*).

What wouldst thou, Agnes?

AGNES.

(*after a pause, leaning on him tenderly.*)

Love thee ever!

And more for that untamed rebellious spirit,
Which oft in every day's revolving space

Thrills me with shapeless fears. O Ubald, Ubald, 430
Agnes hath being but in thy look's sunshine.
To be thine, thine, were bliss: of other union
The thought with icy chill upon my heart
Falls like death's warning.

UBALD.

Of another union!

God's mercy! is not Agnes mine? my prize? 435
My life, my better self? Have I not won thee, earn'd
thee?

Taken thee to my soul's core? my crown, my glory!

AGNES.

Would that to-morrow were past! The palm of strife
Hangs on a slippery chance. Thine arm is matchless,
But the weak flutter of a maiden's fear 440
Draws the blood curdling to the seat of life,
When in the balance hangs all hope of bliss,
And in one scale is death.

UBALD.

My blushing trembler,
What arm of man, in tourney or in war,
Has bow'd my crest? Who has withstood my dint? 445
And when this hand, worth mines of adamant,
Is the high guerdon of the bloodless tilt,
Will Ubald's arm be not itself to-morrow?

AGNES.

I should be fearless, for on thee my trust
Leans with true confidence; my bosom throbs 450
Responsive to hope's pulse, and still is joyous.

UBALD.

Speak ever thus! If valor could be lull'd,
There is a charm in thy Circëan smile
Might steep it in perdition.

AGNES.

Dear Ubald,

I well remember, I was scant thirteen, 455
A wayward girl scarce witting what I loved,

When one bright morn, beneath the embowering grove
Deep in yon flowery garden, I was stretch'd.

My hair all loose, my wimple cast aside,
And my young fancy was upon the wing 460

Shaping fond wishes; when, as I mine eyes
Uplifted, by my side there stood a form
Such as I ne'er had seen. Her dress was strange,
And motley; her cheek wore a sallow hue,
But ardent through that dark complexion glow'd 465

A hectic flush: her look had such a spell
As passes human tongue to tell or liken,
The coiled serpent's spell, that charms its prey
By the eye's glance; nor could I my face withdraw
From the full speculation of that eye 470

That gazed upon me, sweet, but sadly wild;
A look, that seem'd to tell of other joys
Than were familiar to her present garb.
Her figure, though in guise terrific, show'd
Perfect concordance, well-turn'd symmetry, 475

And the fine features of her tawny face
Seem'd beauty's ruin.

UBALD.

Certes a wierd woman;
Such figures sometimes cross our path in life,
Holding deep converse with our destinies,
Which for small price they oft reveal most strangely.

AGNES.

'Twas even so. Silent some while she stood,
Then, with a voice that lack'd not melody,
Pour'd a wild ditty, whose sweet-warbled notes
Still vibrate strangely on my captived ear.
Then gently on my hand she fix'd her touch, 485
While I lay witch'd by that harmony,
And with enquiring finger search'd my palm,
Which I half fearful yielded, half content;
And she would tell my fate, for such small coin
As my young means might tender.

UBALD.

Did thine ear 490

Receive her hidden lore?

AGNES.

O yes, my pulse

Throbb'd high and quick with expectation.

She said, my soul was weak, but apt for love,

And, if I lack'd not courage, I should wed

My soul's best treasure; but this threat subjoin'd, 495

If knight or prince should win my fated hand,

Who owed his state to aught save shining valor,

Frightful perdition would o'erwhelm my house

And his that wed me.

UBALD.

That strange tale is rife;

And I do well believe, sweet flower of Jutland, 500

Predicted ruin hath scared many a suitor,

Whose lordly crest and richly purpled trappings

Shrunk from the threat of fate.

AGNES.

Blest be that curse,
Which daunts the prowess of unwelcome rivals!

UBALD.

Nay, sweetest, would I had a thousand rivals, 505
And on each head a princely diadem,
So I might pluck bright honor from their crests,
And place it on my Agnes' brow of beauty!

AGNES.

Insatiable of glory! Will no thought
Of thy loved Agnes win thy soul to mildness? 510
O Ubald! if thine arm be blest to-morrow,
Our course is level; the fair gales of heaven
Will waft us to that fairy land of hope,
Which we have gazed on, as the mariner
After long peril of the boisterous seas. 515
But if mischance attend thee, here I vow,
By our best hopes, by all these maiden blushes,
No force shall yield this hand, thine own true hand,
To other lord: and well my soul assures me,

(Though mystery hangs o'er thy secret birth) 520
That Ubald came not of ignoble race. ·
Valor and love uphold thine arm to-morrow!
Till then, farewell.

[*Exit* AGNES.]

UBALD (*thoughtfully*.)

Of an ignoble race!

It cannot be! I feel within me that,
Which doth confirm me of proud origin. Else 525
Why throbs my breast with aspirations
Of such high nature? The steed bred for toil,
Though pamper'd in the stall of lordly knights,
Paws not the field, nor snuffs the air, and neighs,
As the swift Arab, when the din of war 530
Comes on his ears erect. Yet would I give
Wealth, power, all pomp of pleasure, and all hope
Save thee, loved Agnes, and this trusty sword,
To know my sire.

(*He stands thoughtfully; THE WANDERER
comes forth unobserved.*)

WANDERER.

Minion of valor, hail!

UBALD.

Ha! a wierd wanderer of the lonely forest! 535

If knowledge dwells within that sallow breast,

She shall resolve my fate.—Woman,—if woman,

Nor rather of such beings as in deserts

Have airy habitation!—canst thou call

To thy mind's eye the semblance of the past, 540

And things still seal'd in the deep womb of time,

Lifting the veil of mazy destiny?

Speak what I am, what I shall be hereafter.

WANDERER.

Ubalde, strange fates hang o'er thee. Thou shalt win,

But winning lose, and in one day's short circle 545

Thou shalt drain all the cup of bliss and anguish.

UBALD.

Foul prophetess, unfold thy hidden meaning.

WANDERER.

Peace, peace, rash youth.

UBALD.

Wierd woman, name my sire !

WANDERER.

I may not now. There is a spirit nigh,
Which, if that name were breathed, would shriek aloud
With such dire adjuration of revenge,
That thy young heart would shrivel like a scroll
Wrapt in devouring flames.

UBALD.

Nay then, my sword—

WANDERER. •

Impotent and vain ! think'st thou, that death
Has terrors, for who walks night's hideous round 555
Like a bann'd spirit, to life's joys and light
Than death itself more dead ?

UBALD.

Fear'st not mine arm ?

WANDERER.

As teeming tempest dreads the mutinous thunder ;
As the sea trembles when its billows roar.

UBALD.

Terrific woman, I adjure thee, name him. 560

WANDERER.

Men deem thee valiant, Ubald. Thou didst climb,
A fearless stripling then, (myself did mark it,)
The giddy height to the crag's beetling brow,
And from its eyrie tore'st the unfledged eaglet.

UBALD.

'Tis true; where never human step had clomb 565
Upon the perilous edge, self-poised, I slew
The parent savage screaming in mid air
O'er the void chasm, and seized its callow young.

WANDERER.

Did that vain bauble fill thy soul? Below thee,
Strong in its beauty, lay this smiling province 570
And Sweno's stately dome. What were thy thoughts,

Proud boy, as firm upon the slippery ledge
Thy foot stood fix'd, and the keen eye survey'd
All the wide plain beneath it?

UBALD.

Thou hast touch'd
A string, to which this heart knows well to answer. 575
By heaven, I gazed from that rash eminence
With no mean pride. My eye stretch'd wide and far
O'er fields and wastes, hamlets and haunts of men,
E'en to the sea sail-studded; and methought
E'en then, some heritage as fair and princely 580
Should own me lord.

WANDERER.

And so perhaps 'tis written
In the closed page of fate. A bloody star
Glared o'er thy birth. Deeds must be done, ere thou
Lord o'er the right of thy proud ancestry,
Shall turn the pure sun red. Darest thou obey 585
The fearful call of thine high destinies?

UBALD.

To the world's verge, though bottomless and unseen.
Light thou the ominous beacon; let thine arm
Point o'er the field of death, and I will follow!

WANDERER.

Valiant!—'tis well: but fame delivers thee, 590
Though vain and choleric, yet weak withal,
And the frail slave of woman. Darest thou win
Thy way to vengeance, and re-assert thy name,
Though white arms stretch to hold thee, and loved eyes
Weep blood for pity?

UBALD.

What beseems a man, 595
That Ubald dares, though all Circassia's smiles
Were leagued to lure him.

WANDERER.

That which vengeance bids
Beseems a man, and thine own wrongs demand it.
Fate has no middle path. Dost thou love, Ubald?

UBALD.

Ask you me, prophetess?

WANDERER.

Death is in the kiss 600

Of those smooth lips thou wooest. Durst thou see
That beauteous form which thy weak fancy doats on,
The hair dishevell'd and the white breast bared,
Hang on thine arm for mercy, and yet, true
To the stern call of vengeance, strike thy poniard 605
E'en to her heart's blood, Ubald?

UBALD.

Curst of heaven!

From what abhorr'd spring flows thine hellish speech?

WANDERER.

It *is* hell speaks! It is the voice of judgment
From the deep throne of night! Hist! hist! I tell thee
The eagle soars which soon must swoop in blood! 610
The lordly eaglet from its eyrie cast
Must plume its wing and flesh in gore its talons!

UBALD.

Woman, thy reason swims; thy thoughts are wild.

WANDERER.

I am not strange; sometimes the dizzy mist
Hangs o'er my brain, and things, long past, seem present.
'Tis the mind's noontide now; the horizon gleams,
And that for which my eyeballs long have strain'd
Glares close within my grasp.

UBALD.

Away, wierd woman!

I hold not parley with hell's messengers.

WANDERER.

Thou canst not leave me, save it be my will; 620
A spell is on thee, Ubald! What fate bids,
Thine arm must execute. The hour is ripe,
The word is gone forth from the throne of judgment:
The spirit of the deep has spoken it.
Hark, Ubald, fear not! To thy bridal feast 625

Bid the wierd wanderer,—Do I read contempt
In thy keen eye? Ha! do these weeds offend thee?

UBALD.

Unearthly form, away!

WANDERER.

Impetuous youth!

When thine heart swells with hope, I shall be near thee!
Thou standest blind upon the fiery brink 630
Of that deep gulph, which it were death to plunge in;
But heaven shall succour and uphold thee, Ubald.
Go forth in pride! go fearless! strike and conquer!

UBALD.

Mysterious prophetess! thy words are awful.

WANDERER.

More shalt thou know hereafter:—this learn, Ubald, 635
There is a fearful record in the heavens;
Angels have written it; the dead bears witness.
Sweno's whole heritage, this envied province,

And that weak maid withal, were a poor barter
For just revenge.

[*Exit* WANDERER.]

UBALD, (*alone.*)

Forbidden lore perchance 640

And sight of visions not for man design'd
Have crazed thee, beldame. Yet was I light before,
And thou hast thrown a load on me. Thy features
Have some strange power which thrills me.—This rich
province!

Why ay; if Sweno's daughter be my bride, 645
Who shall gainsay my claims?—Ha! spoke she true?
My name, my sire unknown; the rights, by nature
Stamp'd on this brow, abolish'd quite and lost;
No ancient crest this gorgeous helm adorning;
Shall slaves call Ubald upstart? The blood cries, 650
This must not be!—O, though unknown, revered!
Father! how longingly my thoughts have yearn'd
To know thy lineaments! If death has snatch'd thee

From this our nether world, look down on me!
For oft thy form has strode across my slumbers! 655
If treason has foredone thee, and robb'd thy son
Of his best heritage, thy spotless name,
O speak to me, in night's still gloom reveal'd,
Declare thy wrongs! Let Ubald fall, or wreak them!

[*Enter REYNALD.*]

REYNALD.

Thou art wrapt in thought. Men speak thee keen and
lightsome, 660
Not given to musing.

UBALD.

Each humor hath its hour.

There is a blithe hour for the lip of love;
The sparkling goblet, the bold clamor of battle
Have theirs: there is an hour for deeper thoughts,
When the soul soars alone beyond the clay 665
That cramps its nature. Be thou welcome, Reynald;
To-morrow must thine helmet bow before me;
This night let us be cheery.

REYNALD.

Thou art boastful,
Rash youth! Reynald is little wont to strive,
Save with his equals. His sword strikes down the lofty,
But spares the herd.

UBALD, (*laying his hand on his sword.*)

To me? to me this, Reynald?

REYNALD.

To whom it fits. Valor on lordly crests
Sits like a jewel in the diadem,
Giving and taking lustre. On the low
It shines unseemly, like love's rosy chaplet 675
On the bald front of age, and moves our pity.

UBALD, (*drawing his sword.*)

Thou hast said that which must be rued in blood.

REYNALD.

Not for thy worth, but that good gift of knighthood
By princely Sweno's hand too largely lavish'd,
I will e'en joust with thee to-morrow, Ubald. 680

So thou shalt learn the weight of that tried arm
Which Pagans shrink from.

UBALD.

By heaven† thou liest, to say
'Twas largely lavish'd! Thou daarest not for thy life
Brand me with lowly birth, though half my honors
Lie in abeyance, and are meekly worn, 685
Till it shall please high heaven to reveal
My birthright. The pure blood throbs here more
warmly,
Caitif, than thine.

REYNALD.

That speech has seal'd thy doom;
Thou shalt not live to view to-morrow's tourney.

[*They fight. Enters SWENO with his sword drawn.*]

SWENO.

Forbear, Ubald, forbear! I charge thee, cease! 690
Kind sir, (to REYNALD) beseems it ill with such rude
broils

To scare our festive joys. Put up, good Ubald.
I pray ye, sirs, on pain to lack our friendship,
Pursue this wrath no further. Let not hate
Lurk in these walls, to rear her deadly front 695
Amidst our mirth. Pray ye, be friends. Who shivers
One lance in wrath is banish'd from our tourney.

UBALD.

We shall have scope hereafter. Farewell, Reynald.

[*Exit* UBALD.]

SWENO.

Reynald, we should this eve be light and gladsome,
But some unfriendly doom o'ertakes and thwarts us. 700

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Tournament. A Pavilion in front of the Area in which are the Lists. If it is not convenient to give a Representation of the Fight, the Scene must be so arranged that the Actors may appear to look down upon the Area in the back of the Stage which is out of the sight of the Audience.

SWENO, BERTHA, AGNES, and Attendants.

SWENO.

THE eye of day looks cheerly on our meeting,
And the bright bucklers of our helmed knights
Send back his courtesy in gleams of fire.

(*flourish.*)

BERTHA.

Who rides so proudly with yon cross of red?

SWENO.

'Tis doughty Reynald, and that black devise 705
Is the known emblem of illustrious Biorn.

(flourish.)

BERTHA.

Mark how they charge! how lance and buckler crash!
The red-cross wins: that sable crest is low.

AGNES.

O father, who is yonder giant champion,
Whose lance seems weightier than a weaver's beam, 710
He of the eagle-crest?

SWENO.

Harald of the Isles.

A readier knight hath never buckled steel!
And by my faith a noble wooer, Agnes.
I knew not of his presence. This day's prize
Hath drawn a sturdy suitor to the lists, 715
And our best gallants quail. By heavens, I miss

Their prompt alacrity : strong Harald rides
Round the void lists as victor, undefined,
And not a lance is couch'd.—See !

Shout without.

Ubald ! Ubald !

SWENO.

See, how young Ubald dares him to the proof! 720
His lance is in the rest.

(flourish.)

On, on they rush,
Like the swift whirlwind ; they are lost in dust.
By heaven, 'tis proudly done !
(Agnes screams faintly, looking forward with eagerness.)

Shout without.

An Ubald ! Ubald !

SWENO.

Why this huge champion of the misty isles
Has trod of ground.—Right gallant Ubald ! 725

O daughter, thou hast lost a princely bridegroom,
And his broad lands in Orkney. Much I marvel
Who may withstand that dint which unhorsed Harald.

BERTHA.

Lo, where the red-cross gleams !

SWENO.

High-crested Reynald !

If any strength can bide him, it is thine ! 730

BERTHA.

What ails thee, child ? Thy cheek is blanch'd with
fear.

Remember, Agnes, of what blood thou comest.

SWENO.

Lightning is not more sudden than their charge.
Saint Mary ! they bear them nobly, both unharm'd ;
The area shakes beneath them. See ! they wheel, 735
Like two big clouds careering in mid air.

They clash again. O what a shock was there !

The steeds are riderless upon their flanks,

Shiver'd each lance. The sword must win the day.

(The clash of swords is heard.)

BERTHA.

Now heaven defend thee, Ubald ! thou hast need 740

Of all thy prowess.

AGNES.

O his foot hath slipt !

Eternal mercy, save him !

SWENO.

He is up,

He bears him like a lion in the fight.

His blows rain thick as hail.

Shout without.

Hurrah ! hurrah !

Ubald, brave Ubald is the victor ! Ubald. 745

(Agnes sinks half faint into the arms of Bertha.)

SWENO.

Our lion-cub has gain'd the day, and nobly.

Shout without.

Ubald ! brave Ubald is the victor ! Ubald !

[Flourish. Enter UBALD, and other KNIGHTS.]

*[Enter UBALD, with his drawn sword in his left hand,
and the broken sword of Reynald in his right.]*

UBALD.

A boon, a boon, sir ! Bid thy seneschal

Cut heronshaw and peacock with this blade,

This boasted dragon-carver from Aleppo ! 750

SWENO.

Ubald, we greet thee with a parent's joy,

The day is thine ; but ere we make thee welcome

As our child's suitor, whose abashed cheek

Has changed fear's livery for a brighter color,

Loud proclamation must the trumpet make, 755

To all, whatever be their rank or station,

Sounding our summons ; so they may unfold
The mystery of thy birth, which we deem noble.

[*Enter REYNALD and others.*]

UBALD.

Make proclamation for a leech,* my sire !
The conqueror of the east, the sultan-slayer, 760
Has wrench'd his princely sinew. Faith 'tis well,
Else Ubald had been minced by this rare blade,
As trenchermen cleave larks. Say'st thou not, Rey-
nald ?

REYNALD.

False boy, thou didst take vantage of my mercy.
'Twas thy foot slipp'd ; and, but I staid mine arm 765
In pity to thy youth, thou wert not here
To taunt me thus. Thou, when I thought thee
shent,
Didst, tygerlike, spring on me unawares,
And that tried falchion snapp'd.

UBALD.

Aye, this strong weapon,
To which the skulls of infidels were paper, 770
Broke on the boy's arm. O 'twas foully play'd
To deal the blows too fast upon thee, Reynald!
I cry thee pardon. It behoved me wait
Till Reynald had ta'en breath. 'Twas most dis-
courteous;
I should have waited on my bended knee 775
Thine own good time.

REYNALD.

This is no feud of words;
Thy way of mirth dishonoreth a name
Which brooks no stain. By all the shades of those
Who at life's cost have known me true and loyal,
I do defy thee, Ubald, unto death. 780
Earth is too narrow for thy spring of pride.

UBALD.

And the nine heavens, my spirit is so buoyant!

Yet deem not, Ubald from thy manly brow
 Would pluck the wreath of reputation
 By such light speech. I do embrace thy challenge; 785
 But hark ye, Reynald, this morn to arms was given,
 Love claims to-morrow.

SWENO.

Sirs, these feuds offend us,
 Thou, Agnes, as befits thee, ~~with~~ yon cuirass,
 Palm of this trysting, gird victorious Ubald.
 Nay, by my knighthood, had I bid thee give 790
 Thyself, a worthier palm, thou couldst not change
 The clear complexion of thy natural hue
 To brighter vermeil. Agnes, on my troth
 I think thou fain ~~wouldst~~ give thy blushing self,
 The unsunn'd whiteness of this ~~single~~ hand, 795
 A brighter guerdon.

(taking her hand, &c.)

How trembler!

Perchance, at our citation, mailed Mars
May claim him to his heaven. Have a care, daughter!
(AGNES *lifts up the golden cuirass to offer it to UBALD.*

*At that moment the trumpet sounds again. Re-
enters MESSENGER hurried.)*

SWENO.

What tidings?

MESSENGER.

Noble Sweno, scarce the herald
Had proclamation made, giving loud breath 800
To the shrill trumpet's brass, when from the crowd
Stepp'd forth a wizzard shape in female guise,
Craving admittance to this lordly presence.
(*Flourish. Enter WANDERER, preceded by a Herald.*)

WANDERER.

Sweno, I come, obedient to thy hest,
Fate's secret to unravel, which disclosed, 805
Egress unharm'd I claim ~~for me~~—and mine.

SWENO.

Granted.—What bear'st thou? From what fountain
sprung

Did valiant Ubald draw the blood of life?

WANDERER.

From hell's own fount accurs'd! A fatal spell
Hung on the horned moon, the raven croak'd, 810
When he was born.—Ubald, behold thy mother!

UBALD.

Base witch, thou liest, to say thou art my mother.
'Tis a foul lie, and thou art wild to speak it!

WANDERER.

What my lips speak, shall my clear proofs avouch.

UBALD.

'Tis false. Produce them, base suborned proofs! 815

SWENO.

A jewell'd bracelet by his side was left.
Canst thou describe it, giving to the ear

Just apprehension of its form and color ?

(To the Herald.)

Bring forth the casket, whose lock bears the rust

Of twenty years.

(He unlocks it.)

WANDERER.

The eyes have shrewder judgment 820

Of nice proportions in the workman's art,

Of shape and size, of color and quaint fashion,

Than the tongue's skill can render to the ear.

Behold its fellow.

*(She gives him a bracelet. He opens the casket, and
takes out a bracelet, which he compares with it.)*

SWENO.

On my faith 'tis strange.

Two sister orbs in the most proper face 825

Shine not with liker water than those gems ;

Nor the long lashes cast more equal shade,

Than does the fretted gold wherein they lie,
Like living lights in the fringed eyelids chased.

UBALD.

O treason! O base thief, thou hast purloin'd it! 830

BERTHA.

'Tis like she hath; with sacrilegious hand
Rifling the vault, where lie entomb'd the bones
Of her who gave thee being.

UBALD.

'Tis like?—'tis certain!

SWENO.

Say, woman, in that helpless infant's cradle
What else was found, by no enquiring eye 835
Save mine and noble Bertha's ever question'd?

WANDERER.

A scroll, whereon these words, in thy mind's tablet
Long since deep graven.—Run not the couplets thus,
Though the last words be from that legend rent?

“ The secret piece from this indenture torn 840

“ Was sever'd at the hour this child was borne

“ From its proud mother; when they reunite,

“ The valiant son shall meet his mother's sight.”

And now I tender to thy judging eye,

Long saved, long cased in gold with precious care, 845

(taking it out of a small box)

The fragment of that scroll.—See, see!—it fits

The nice indentures of that wavy rent,

Which no art's skill could liken! See the words

Traced by one hand, quaint nature's character!

Comes that untainted scroll from the damp vault 850

Of charnel-houses? Am I not thy mother?

SWENO.

O past conjecture wondrous! Name his father.

WANDERER.

He has no father! Ask the wandering billows

Of the storm-beaten sea, who made their bosom

Team with the finny myriads! Ask the winds, 855

•

Who fill'd their darkling and invisible womb
With blight and pestilence ! He has no father.

U BALD.

Dread being ! mother not, but fiend, I name thee !
If true the accursed tale, thy child of want,
Safe cradled in the arms of joy and honor, 860
Why call'st thou now to misery and ruin ?
Why dash to earth the wreath, thine art had woven ?
Speak, foul witch, speak.

WANDERER.

Betray'd, out-cast, abandoned,
Man's roof has not o'er-shelter'd me ; the blast,
Not age, has blanch'd these elf-locks. I have known 865
Dire want and loneliest savage wanderings.
The fearfulest glens, the tangled precipice,
Have been my lair ; the demon of the tempest
My comforter : to sights abhorr'd of men
And fellowship with every cavern's inmate 870
Use has made me familiar ; the gaunt wolf,

The eagle, knows my coming and outgoing,
And in compassion to man's outcast yields
Share of his bloody banquet. Where I roam'd,
The nightdew was my balm, the baleful clouds 875
My canopy; and, by their sulphurous bolts
Illumed, my rocky threshold gleam'd with splendor
'That did outshine the emblazon'd halls of kings.
Nor envied I man's palaces.—But such
Was not fit cradle for weak infancy. 880
The firm endurance of an injured soul
May smile mid nature's terrors, and even hail
'The fiend that nurtures them; but helpless years
Lack milder mother's-milk.

SWENO.

What phrensy then,
Mysterious phantom, say, what hateful purpose 885
Now, in the prime and summer of its growth,
Strikes down that glorious scion, deck'd with honors,

From this exalted station, where thy fraud
Had safely planted it?

WANDLERER.

Look upon me ;
Proud mortal, mark this gaunt and abject being ; 890
These skeleton-like limbs and sun-parch'd skin
Which once had bloom and beauty ! — See me now
The haggard child of want, and scorn, and wo !
Whose hope is but despair ! The very dogs
Howl after me, as if the mouldering grave 895
Had cast me from its foul abhorred womb
Polluting with my breath the face of heaven.
Sunk as I am, perchance amid the blaze
Of yon gilt banners, girded with the pomp
Of gorgeous chivalry, some bosom shrinks 900
From inward horror, to whose nightly visions
My lot were paradise. I would not change
These tatter'd garments for your bravery.—
Ubold, awake ! If I have dash'd from thee

This cup of joy, drugg'd deep with smiling mischief; 905
If all the friends of thy proud-budding youth
Drop off from thee, as from the wither'd tree
The worms that fed on it; if glory's course
Rejects thee, offspring of despair and want;
Know, thou hast friends among the wrecks of nature. 910
O there is joy amid the crashing storm,
When the rack scuds before the rushing winds,
And all is ruin! Where the sea-mew screams
Mid desert caves may be thy nuptial bower;
The howling wolves shall yield thee minstrelsy. 915
Ha! ha! ha! (*She laughs hideously*).

SWENO, (*rising*.)

Out of my sight, accursed of heaven! away!

WANDERER.

(*Withdrawing* slowly, with a look and action of
threatening and savage contempt.*)

The curse of heaven will be soon fulfill'd.

[*Exit.*

SWENO.

Brave champions, this our joy is turn'd to sadness.

Ubald, we still uphold thee ; and thy deeds

Shall win thee rank and reverence and honors : 920

But such alliance suits not with our bearing ;

And we perforce must name, of those whose rank

May make them bold to be our daughter's suitors,

Reynald, though vanquish'd, victor.—Welcome, Reynald !

Child of my heart, come with me.

AGNES.

Ubald ! Ubald ! 925

(Exeunt all but UBALD, who remains alone in deep thought. The Scene falls in front representing a Woodland outside the Lists. UBALD enters slow and thoughtful, and leans on the point of his sword. He starts suddenly into a defensive attitude.)

UBALD.

Avaunt ! spectre of hell, avaunt !—Stay, Ubald !

Thy brain is madden'd; thy stunn'd senses reel.

(Starting again.)

Who dared to call this wretched being Ubald?

There was a time, I well remember me,

When that name sounded in the lists of fame, 930

Valor's first minion: 'twas a gallant name,

And he who bore it, vail'd his crest to none,

And men would doff their caps, and cry "Live Ubald!"

'Tis past—it was a dream—I am not Ubald!

All, all's unsound! the very earth we tread on 935

A counterfeit! a faithless sod, that mantles

The bubbling of a bottomless abyss.

Nature itself is false.—There is no Ubald!

He, who usurp'd that name's a slave, an upstart!

A liar, a pitiful, a base-born slave! 940

(A pause.)

I have heard tell, that, when the unchaste moon

Peeps with her broad eye glaring from above,

Men's thoughts are phrensied: I do well believe,

That we are drawn like puppets by her power
Through fate's invisible and airy maze, 945
Even as the tides of ocean ebb or swell
At her strong bidding. Life's a mockery,
And we, that tread this motley earth, are fools,
And madmen. Else, amid the battle's hurley
Why has this arm oft turn'd the flood of war, 950
Outvying opposition, till the cry
Of victory through all the welkin rang,
Filling the trump of glory? if that name,
Once bright like Lucifer, and like him lost,
Falls as a star from heaven!—O Agnes, Agnes, 955
What demon from my hand has dash'd the chalice,
Which thou hadst crown'd with bliss!—Ha! if thy , ,
faith
Forswear me now,—baseborn—despised—rejected.
I will not, dare not think it.—Joy of my soul,
I still have trust in thee!

*(He remains wrapt in thought, THE WANDERER
enters unperceived.)*

WANDERER, *(aside.)*

My son!—alas, 960

In that brief word how many thoughts lie blended!

O long divorced, estranged, from this lone heart,

And yet my son!—I thought my soul was steel'd

Against all fond impression, trebly arm'd

With the keen temper of the merciless blade! 965

And yet how painfully the name of son

Falls on this wither'd heart!—O Ubald, Ubald,

The cherub peace is waking in my soul,

Which has not carol'd there since thou wert born!

(Aloud.)

My son!

UBALD, *(seizing her vehemently.)*

Call me not son!—O Satan's mate! 970

By what foul spell hast thou atchieved my ruin?

What traitor has suborn'd thee? Make thy treason

As manifest as day, or I will tear
Thy shrivell'd flesh, and cast it to the wolves.
Hast thou not told a tale of damning falsehood? 975

WANDERER.

If I be Satan's mate, thy fury speaks thee
Child of my womb.

(He lets go his hold.)

'Tis meet that I, fate's tool,
Should be accurst of mine own issue. Smite me,
Fierce Ubald! Bury in eternal night
The secret of thy birth! Slay her, who bore thee!

UBALD.

O terrible of women, I will kneel
Even in prostration meekly to the hem
Of thy rent garment, so thou wilt reveal
The name of him whose stamp I bear.

WANDERER.

'Twould need
A raven's note to name him. Rather ask 985

That fearful word, which, but once breathed aloud,
Would have dissolv'd the fabric of this world
And all the gorgeous firmament above us,
Letting hell loose from its eternal chain.

UBALD.

And though the sky should reel, the rock-staid sea 990
With the foundations of the crazy earth
Quake to their base, I would demand it.

WANDERER.

Ubald,

There stands between thee and thy burning wishes
A wide gulph fixt, which to o'erleap were death.
By all heaven's flaming lights thou art my child!—
Wilt thou avenge me, Ubald?—The event
Hangs on my word, whether to uphold or plunge thee
Deep, deep, into that fiery gulph of ruin.

UBALD.

My heart yearns painfully to know my father.

WANDERER.

Thou shalt learn nothing, till I am revenged ! 1000
Rave, thou hot youth ! Strike rashly, strike thy
mother !

Or kneel, and, Ubald, swear to slay the man
Who made thee fatherless ! I tell thee, son,
If that thou hast an ear, a heart, a soul,
That cry for vengeance, which appals me nightly, 1005
Must have been heard by thee. Swear, Ubald, swear !

UBALD.

There needs no oath to spur me to that goal,
No, nor blind curse ! By heaven, show me the man,
That made an orphan of ill-fated Ubald,
And I will drag him to such strict account, 1010
No second sun shall dawn on him and me.

WANDERER.

Swear it !

UBALD.

By all heaven's gifts I swear it !—Name him.

WANDERER.

Sweno ! proud Sweno made thee fatherless !

Haste, Ubald ! slay him !—Wilt thou not avenge me ?

UBALD.

The spirit of Satan dwells in thy foul lips ! 1015

Thou dardest not say it !

WANDERER.

Wilt thou not avenge me ?

UBALD, (*with great emotion.*)

Say, who ! and when, and where ! how fell my father ?

WANDERER.

Nay, not a word, till that dread debt be paid :

Then shall my speech reveal no humble rights.

. . Ubald, thine oath ! Vengeance on haughty Sweno !

UBALD.

Mysterious Being, thy words fall like drops

Of poison, blistering whate'er they touch.

My soul is horror-struck. Shall Ubald slay

One sire, kind substitute for nature's tie,

At thy strange bidding, unreveal'd the tale 1025
Of his lost birthright, and unknown his father ?

WANDERER.

Wilt thou not slay him ?

UBALD.

By the living light,
I will not touch his hoary brow with harm,
For all that thou and thy fell crew can tempt with !

WANDERER.

O say not thus—'twere better for thee, Ubald, 1030
To riot in the blood of innocents,
To earn the mark of Cain, than bear the doom
Which must o'erwhelm thee if thou brave this bidding.
Stay! the ground quakes beneath thee !

UBALD.

Let it gape:

I will not hurt the head of honor'd Sweno. 1035

WANDERER.

Beware ; his lot is seal'd ; and thine hangs trembling

In the eternal scale ; whether to reap
Thy glorious heritage, or wear a curse,
Which but to whisper would make the horrent hair
Bristle thy youthful brows. Wilt thou kill Sweno ?

UBALD.

Not, though the firm earth yawn'd, and from its depth
Fate own'd thy ministry.

WANDERER.

O fiends of vengeance,
Sear up my milk of nature ! Dry the source
Of pity's womanish tears, or let them fall
Like water on the hissing furnace cast, 1045
Giving new strength to all-devouring flame !
Devoted Ubald, be fate's will atchieved,
Though it must shiver thee ! If vengeance move not,
Love shall perforce arouse thee ! Shall that Reynald
To-morrow, triumphing in thy disgrace, 1050
Lead Agnes to the altar ! Shall Ubald gape,
And cry, " Long live the bride ! Health and ripe joys

“ Attend their wedded couch !” Go, crave their alms,
And beg some base coin from the lusty bridegroom !

UBALD.

The voice of fiends is in thee. O thy words 1055
Have rush'd like molten fire upon my soul !
Thou canst not say that she will wed with Reynald.

WANDERER.

Will!—nay, she must.—Is not the faith of Sweno
To Reynald pledged ? or is that haughty chief
In love a laggard ? Know this, by thine abasement
To-morrow Agnes is his bride, unless
She be to-night thine, Ubald.

UBALD.

Ha ! how say'st thou ?

WANDERER.

This night or never must Agnes be thy wife.

UBALD.

To-night ?—They say the devil sometimes speaks true.

WANDERER.

(Giving him a key.)

Take this, love's talisman. The wierd scorn'd Wanderer
May crown thy wishes yet: its powerful spell
Shall yield thee entrance to young Agnes' bower,
When earth is wrapt in gloom.

UBALD.

Woman of might,
Give to thy meaning words. If love prevail,
Where and how wedded shall mine Agnes be 1070
At that still season?

WANDERER.

In Helen's ruin'd chapel.
When first the moon upon your secret flight
Throws her slant beam, beneath the porch a priest
Shall wait thy bidding.—Speed! arouse her love!
Triumph o'er maidish dread! or the next sun 1075
Must dawn on Reynald's bliss.

UBALD.

On Reynald's death,
Or shall see Agnes mine.

WANDERER.

Under that chapel
A secret cell is hewn ; that obscure vault
Shall be thy bridal chamber.—Fear'st thou, Ubald ?
Splendor it lacks, and soft luxurious ease, 1080
To cheer a dainty fair one ; but its stillness
Is fitting such a stealth. This night or never !
Ubald, time flies.

UBALD.

Befriend me, powerful Love !
My thoughts are all amazed and unarray'd,
I walk as in a mist ; be this night, Agnes, 1085
Our first fond entrance into weal or wo !

[*Exit* UBALD.]

THE WANDERER, (*alone.*)

He's gone ; he's gone.—Be still, thou coward heart !

I know not whether I am dead or waking.
The world seems dark around me, and such deeds
Are doing, that the sun must shrink for ever. 1090
Methought I heard the voice of one, who drowning
Cried, “ mother, save me ! help me, ere I sink ! ”
And then methought two spirits strongly strove
To drag me diversely ; one pure as light,
The beam of radiant mercy on its brow ; 1095
The other foul and loathsome, fierce as death,
Mocking the agony of convulsive sobs,
And its fell strength prevail’d. O powers of evil,
There be some hallow’d moments, when this soul
Can wrestle with your might, and dovelike peace 1100
Seems like a lovely vision, seen far off !
Now all is dark : the Spirit of revenge
Knocks, Sweno, at thy gate. Thy knell is rung.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Sweno's Hall.*SWENO, REYNALD *and others.*

SWENO.

We do admit thy claims, but some short space
Crave ere the accomplishment. A troublous star 1105
Lowers o'er our house: we lack the pulse of joy
For bridal revels.—I fear my child had framed
Some hopes which must prove vain; but Sweno's
daughter
Will know what fits her station.

[*Enter Attendant.*]*Attendant.*

Ubald craves

Admittance.

SWENO.

By your leave.

(*Reynald and others fall back to the further end
of the stage.*)

SWENO, (*alone.*)

Wo to who rears 1110

The tyger's young! and yet I love thee, Ubald.

[*Enters Ubald.*]

Be welcome, Ubald! Sweno's hall is open

To all his knights; to none, than thee, more freely.

UBALD.

There was a time, nor is it long by-gone—

An hour or two perchance—when Sweno's hall 1115

Was open to his son—his foster'd son,

Who, from life's earliest dawn to manhood, knew

No other sire;—nor now.—Dost thou disclaim me?

SWENO.

Would that thou wert my son! Brave youth, this heart

Would leap to see my crest and gallant bearings 1120

With all the honors that my house has earn'd

Worn by mine issue. 'Tis the curse of fate

A stranger shall gird Sweno's sword, a stranger

Lord o'er this princely fief, when I depart,

The last male of my race. I would give half 1125
My wealth thou wert my son.

UBALD.

It hath pleased God
To shrowd the fountain of my birth, perchance
For some unpurged offence. And yet methinks,
If there be one upon this lower earth
To whom it stands reveal'd, that should be Sweno. 1130

SWENO.

Ha! how say'st thou?

UBALD.

I say, it should be Sweno.
Why didst thou rear me as thy child, if baseborn?
The lion brings not to his tawny mate
The jackall's cub. O Sweno, I adjure thee
By the one hope I harbor this side heaven, 1135
Unveil my secret birth.

SWENO.

Am I a prophet,

Ubald? Hath not this morn too much reveal'd
Of thy sad story?

UBALD.

Nothing! I stand alone,
Sever'd from every tie, but such as bind me
To thee and thine. My birth is wrapt in gloom 1140
Thick as the inaccessible cloud, which hides
The shrine upon the peak of Caucasus.

SWENO.

Ubald, when first I saw thee, thou wert smiling,
A helpless infant, upon Bertha's bosom.
The fearless smile craved pity. From that hour 1145
(For we esteem'd thee sprung of gentle stock)
Thou hast lack'd nothing, which a parent's fondness
Could lavish on the heir of all his fortunes.
Like a king's issue hast thou been upbrought
With every princely gift; and last, not lightest, 1150
The boon of knighthood.

UBALD.

Sir, that debt is written
Here with indelible characters, and claims
The service of this arm till death.

SWENO.

O Ubald,

I have e'en loved thee like an anxious father ;
And thou hast fill'd that void in my affections 1155
Which nature left, denying me a son.
Now haply it behooves me cast thee from me
Adown the vale of life, seeing (though late)
That thou hast clomb unto this lofty nest
From such a lowly and disgracious fortune. 1160
But still I love thee, and will uphold thy knighthood
At no mean cost; but higher hopes are wreck'd
By thy base origin.

UBALD.

O thou dost not, canst not,

Believe it, Sweno!—It is false as hell;
The tongue that did avouch it is accurst. 1165

SWENO.

Ubald, intemperate wrath does ill become
Thy present station. Be of humbler strain!
We are to blame, who have uprear'd thy youth
In boisterous license. Think, what now befits thee.

UBALD.

It fits me, sir, to guard with jealous honor 1170
The rights you gave me; nor will I renounce
Of those one smallest title, while I gird
This sword of knighthood, which departs not from me,
Save in the grasp of death. Were my race abject,
• As the blood cries within me it is noble, 1175
I have earn'd that, in perilous fields of fame,
Which doth outshine the best and loftiest birthdom,
A soldier's rank. Upon thy pledged word
I claim my prize, the hand of Agnes.—Start not,

'Tis truth ; there lives not in this realm of Jutland 1180
Who can deny my right.

SWENO.

I—Sweno—tell thee,
I, I, would plunge this sword, my father's weapon,
Like he of Rome, into my daughter's bosom,
Abolishing with her each joy of age,
Ere she should soil by such a foul alliance 1185
The blood of my fore-elders.

UBALD.

It is false ;
It were no stain to wed with Ubald. Hark ye,
Sir—fearless I assert—mark well my words—
Thou canst not, durst not, Sweno, for thine honor,
Uphold that wizzard's tale.

SWENO.

Nay, by my sword, 1190
Her proofs admit not doubt or question.

UBALD.

O monstrous ! By that selfsame speech convicted,
Thou wert a murderer. Ay, start now, and learn
What 'tis to have the jewel of thy life
Hang on a traitor's proof !

SWENO.

Boy, thou art frantic. 1195

UBALD.

By heaven, I am calm ; I speak the things I know,
And I embrace with juster apprehension
Their form and bearings, than thou dost. Take me
with thee,
I do not charge on thee that damning guilt ;
Here I discard the thought, as loathsome treason 1200
Gender'd in hell. But, if her speech were true,
Thine hate has robb'd me of a princely father.
She speaks—not I.—Her voice cries loud for vengeance.

Thou canst not heap her tale upon my head,
And not take home to thine that charge of murder.

SWENO.

What ho !

(Reynald, &c. come forward.)

Sirs, we are bearded in our hall ;
The whelp, which we have nurtured, turns upon us
With rabid fang. Thus from our love we cast him !
Base-born, away ! we brook not thy rash words.

UBALD, *(drawing his sword.)*

Say'st thou ? And yet I have no sire but thee. 1210
No other tongue had scorn'd me thus, and lived !
No other eye upon my fallen fortunes
Had glared, as thine does now ! I will not harm thee.
Thou, Reynald, thou whose bold pretensions
Assail my rights, stand forth. Let heaven decide 1215
Which be the better and the nobler champion.
Thou didst erewhile defy me unto death.

REYNALD.

I did ; and thy bold arm eschew'd the cartel

Even in the shelter of a woman's bower.

That arm perhaps is abject as thy birth. 1220

UBALD, (*fighting.*)

Thus—thus—we shall be quickly weigh'd.

SWENO, (*interposing.*)

Stand back !

I do forbid the challenge. Lay hands on him.

(*The Knights interpose with drawn swords.*)

We have been far too mild ; but Sweno's presence

Shall not be braved. Our will is thus determined ;

To-morrow, Reynald, thou shalt wed our daughter.

But if thou wieldest sword or lance before,

We cast thee from our love.

(*To UBALD.*) Thou, sir, begone.

We would not willingly let thee down the wind ;

But thou, unruly tarsel, quitt'st thy perch

To strike too high a quarry. Lead him forth. 1230

UBALD.

Which is the vassal will lay hands on Ubald?—
I quit thee, Sweno.—Thou hast done me wrong,
Which haply should wipe out the memory
Of all I owe thee:—but it is not so.
Thou, haughty Reynald, mark me. It were safer 1235
To take the fleshless and abhorred death
To be thy mate, than lay the hand of power
Upon mine Agnes.

[*Exit.*

REYNALD.

Faith, thou bear'st thee nobly;
And I could prize thee rather in its ebb,
Than brook the rash flow of thy better fortune. 1240

SWENO.

We do desire the Lady Agnes' presence.

[*Exit Attendant.*

Reynald, I am much moved. This headstrong youth
Has part in my affections, and my daughter

Regards his worth too highly: if she bewail him,
We must be brief, and use authority, 1245
Though it sound harsh.

(*Enters AGNES.*)

(*SWENO, embracing her.*)

My child!

AGNES.

My gracious sire!

SWENO.

Thou art pale, and yet, believe me, child, I love thee
As my best hope on earth.—Said I my best?
My only hope!

AGNES.

Ever my own kind father!

SWENO.

I have no son. A son is to his father 1250
A mirror, in the which his aged eyes
May read their image; ay, a magic mirror,
Which doth give back himself, his form and likeness,

Even in the pride and semblance of his youth!—
Thou would'st speak, but the inarticulate sound 1255
Dies on thy lips.

AGNES.

Sir—Something I would say,
But it might savor of presumptuous wishes
To think a worthless maiden could reflect
Ought of her father's virtues, in whom the mould
Of nature's noblest pattern is most perfect : 1260
Yet gazing on them, living in the shine
Of all thy glories, something my thoughts must bor-
row

From thine high attributes; and store it here
As the pale ineffectual orb of night
Drinks the sun's lustre.

SWENO.

I do esteem thee, Agnes, 1265
Worthy thy blood; one in whom gentle pleasance

With loftier thoughts is wedded ; born to grace
Thy noble lord and rear his princely issue
To wear our dignities.

AGNES.

Sir ?

SWENO.

We lack an heir
To bear them worthily. Behold the Knight 1270
Whose unmatch'd prowess we have this day chosen,
To uphold our race. Thou art a bride to-morrow.

AGNES.

Say not unmatch'd—O, sir, you are too hasty.

(Kneeling.)

. . Pray you, recall that speech ! 'Twas but yestre'en
You said, my lord must stand in arms unrivall'd ; 1275
I do take sanctuary on those thy words,
The altar of thy truth.

SWENO.

And so he does.

AGNES.

O father, I address me to your justice!
I will not plead, as other maids are used,
The dreamings of the fancy. I adjure thee 1280
By thine own blood which throbs within this heart,
Do not that wrong! for Ubald is the victor.
And if that strange tale (false perchance) have thrown
A shade upon his fortunes, and ta'en from him
The sunshine of thy favor, let me bide 1285
E'en as I am, thine own, thy loving handmaid!
Or if that be too blessed, and his fall
Must marr my joys and cast me forth from thee,
O let me in some barren cloister chew
The bread of solitude, but do not curse me 1290
With such worse thralldom!

SWENO.

Daughter, thou offendest.
Thou sinn'st against thy name. I bid thee purge
The avenues of thy thoughts, and from that bosom

Pluck the foul image which is nurtured there
With all its baseness. Gods! shall Sweno's child 1295
Stoop to a beggar's wooing?—Leave my cloak.

AGNES.

Say not to-morrow, father!

SWENO.

Loose me! rise!

The valiant Reynald has my word. Receive him,
As fits thee, courteously.

(Going, while she stretches her arms to follow him.)

I bid thee stay.

[Exit SWENO, &c. Manent AGNES, REYNALD.]

AGNES.

My father!—He has left me.—Now, good angels, 1300
Arm me with strength. I will embrace my shroud
Ere I prove faithless.

REYNALD.

This hand, midst war's alarums,
Has purchased honor in the hazardous field

At my life's hourly venture; but the frown
Of lovely woman I am ill wont to strive with. 1305

AGNES.

There is no strife between us, sir.—What mean you?
I wear my temper evenly, as fits
The daughter of a prince; if thou hast cause
Of strife, declare it.

REYNALD.

No cause, fair Agnes,
Saving such war, as oft-times is the herald 1310
Of gentle love. Permit

(He offers to take her hand.)

AGNES.

Touch me not, sir!
I may not brook thy freedom.

REYNALD.

On my knee

AGNES.

Go to, go to; I take no fallen champion,

No knight whose sword is broken. I commend you
Unto that Syrian princess whom you rescued! 1315
You soar too high.

REYNALD.

Ha! Dost thou scorn me, lady?

AGNES.

Hast thou ne'er heard, how they of heathendom
Stood back in awe, before the livid corse
Which to their gods was consecrate by lightning?
E'en such am I; amid the joys of youth 1320
Struck by the angry bolt of heaven, and will
Henceforth hold fellowship with nothing earthly.
I do embrace the altar, and will rather
Wear out my years in solitary penance
Than wed with thee.

[*Exit.*

REYNALD.

'Tis strange; this baseborn churl
Spreads an infectious rashness. Scornful maid,

This may be rued; for thou perforce art mine
In all thy flood of beauty, and must bend.
This splendid heritage outweighs thy love.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

THE WANDERER, (*alone.*)

THAT thou dost love the maid suits well my purpose;

It is the helm which guides thee to that port

Where vengeance calls; but think not thou shalt take

That viper to thy bed, the child of Sweno!

Lost as I am, and stamp'd by nature's curse,

Thou art my son; and sooner would I wring 1335

The life blood from this heart, than see thee batten

On that abhorred couch. Once have I stood

Between thee and that leap, when fate scem'd fixt,

And thou already in thine ardent hopes

Forejoyd'st her charms. Once more I will arrest thee,

Ere Agnes be thy wife; or, if thou wedd'st,

Thou shalt embrace a corse.—This is fate's seal,

(producing a phial.)

Love's antidote. This philtre from thine hand
Shall lull her maidish fears in that sound sleep
Which knows no waking.

[Enter UBALD.]

UBALD.

Woman, still thou meet'st me
At each turn like my evil destiny.
What wilt thou?

WANDERER.

Aid thee.

UBALD.

I would be alone.

The blood is stirr'd within me, and thy sight
Offends my thoughts.

WANDERER.

Hast thou seen Agnes?

UBALD.

Seen her!

In the broad face of day I have required her, 1350
My prize, my right. Great gods! I have been scorn'd,
Trampled by Sweno's pride.

WANDERER.

'Tis well.—The curse
Will soon o'ertake him. Thou seek Agnes' chamber;
The shades of evening thicken, and the sounds
Of clamorous revelry are sunk in silence; 1355
It is the hour of love.

UBALD.

Speak not of love;
I feel a strange and preternatural awe
Thrill through me in thy presence. Leave me, woman.

WANDERER.

Yet will I aid thee, Ubald. Take this phial,
A potent philtre, brew'd with secret spells 1360
When the moon's face was full: in man 'twould breed

Aversion, fear, or death ; but, given to woman,
Its powerful charm will so enthrall her will
Led by its strong invisible influence,
That she must bend to him who ministers. 1365
Give this, and she is won.

UBALD, (*taking it*).

I have e'en heard
That such things are, and of portentous might.
Thou rosy`draught, in which the loves sit smiling,
No sea-tost mariner ere hail'd the land
With its fresh dawn of verdure, no sick mourner 1370
The beam of health, with such heart-stirring joy
As the scorn'd lover, vex'd with hopeless wishes,
Would bless thy perfidy ! O most subtle thief,
Canst thou with witching and seductive skill
From the closed issues of the pitiless mind 1375
Draw sweet accordance, moulding the stern thoughts
Even to the form and quality of fondness?

WANDERER.

The virtue is in the proof. Present that philtre,
And thou shalt find the gently kindled heart
Turn quick and tremulously to thy bidding, 1380
As doth the magnet to its proper pole.

UBALD.

These toys are for the humble;—such as crawl
Content to owe their summer-growth of fortune
To paltry plotting and mean artifice.
Woman, I scorn thy gifts.

(He dashes it on the ground.)

When Ubald takes 1385
The kiss of love, or unbought wreath of honor
By a wizzard's trick, fall from him, gracious Heaven!
To others thy curst wares! my hopes need no
Unhallow'd aid.

WANDERER.

Mad boy, thou art undone!
The fruit, when thou hast press'd its precious savor,

Shall turn to bane : the venomous rind cling to thee
Loathsome, destroying life. Still take my counsel,
Ere fate shall close her adamant gate
Thro' which there is no return.

UBALD.

I will not, sorceress.

Thine indirect and artful policy 1395
Suits not my bearing.—Come, thou holy parent,
First source of love, with unadulterate speech
Inform my tongue, and show the guileless spell
Of thine own eloquence, resistless Nature!—
Bid thy priest wait me under Helen's porch. 1400
Thus far I use thee.

[*Exit.*

THE WANDERER, (*alone.*)

O fell Destiny,
With what prevailing and tremendous power
Thou goad'st me to the goal! Thy tread is like
The rush of many waters, indistinct

But dreadful, coming louder on the ear
And big with ruin. I am borne on by fate 1405
And that relentless never-ceasing voice
Which swells within me to the utterance,
My mother's cry. It is here, here, here, rising

(She touches her forehead)

As the low murmur from the hollow earth
Which bodes the hurricane.—See there! See there!
She stands; she beckons—See! she glares upon me,
As in the frantic moments of her death.
There was none near her in that agony,
But the lost wretch who drew perdition on her.
Away, away, this is no time for thought. 1415

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

The Garden before the Door of AGNES' Chamber.

Dusk.

UBALD.

Once more, loved shades, I tread your fragrant lawn,
Scene of my earliest joys! not, as before,
Elate and joyous; but, like night's marauder,
I steal unto the plunder of those joys
Day will not yield me. I am ill used to deeds 1420
That shun the light; my firm nerve quakes and trembles,
Which never blench'd before. Strange thoughts assail
me.

With what a plain and level course till now
My barque has steer'd through this world's stormy
ocean,
Breasting its turbulent wave as if in triumph! 1425
Now is my course obscured, and tempest-tost
I roam amid the billows. In thee, Agnes,

Life's only sunshine dwells: joy, fame, and glory,
Are but the rays of one revolving circle,
In which thy cherish'd form is fixt and center'd.— 1430
No voice.—The sounds of mirth have ceased within,
And no lights flit along those arched casements.
Now to love's work! Be still, thou murky air,
And shroud with thy soft veil the theft I purpose!

(Holding out the key and unlocking the door.)

O thou quaint minister to daring love, 1435
Do thy kind secret office, and unlock
This shrine of chastity!—Hush!—Agnes! Agnes!
'Tis Ubald's voice that steals upon thy slumber.

AGNES, *(coming out fearfully.)*

• • What means my Ubald? At this hour! alone!
How couldst thou break the privacy of my chamber?
I dare not speak with thee.

UBALD.

Nay, nay, Agnes,
Time yields no season now for doubt or scruples.

I would not trench, no not by one small atom,
Upon that reverence my love should yield thee;
But, while we speak, e'en now wing'd moments fly, 1445
To wrest thee from mine arms for ever. Agnes,
I have not built my love upon the sand?
Thy faith will not fall from me?

AGNES.

Sooner, Ubald,
This timid heart would brave the oppressor's sword,
Than fall from thee; but steal not like a thief 1450
Upon the night; I dare not greet thee freely,
My life, my lord.

UBALD.

If Ubald is thy life,
Thou must be his, and this night, lovely trembler.

AGNES.

O Ubald, thou art wild to say to-night.

UBALD.

I am not wild: and yet I am wild, Agnes, 1455

To think that life's whole joy is on the cast
Of this swift hour.

AGNES.

This hour!

UBALD.

Thou darest not bide
Till the morn break, and with insulting joy
Reynald shall come to tear thee to the altar!

AGNES.

O never, Ubald! by our loves I swear 1460
Sooner to die, than wrong thee!

UBALD.

Oaths are vain. *

Hands even now are plying, chaplets woven,
To deck thee for to-morrow's sacrifice;
Sweno has vow'd it. Agnes, thou art mine
This night, or blood must stream upon thy bridal. 1465

AGNES.

Merciful heaven! what dost thou meditate?
O Ubald, smite not in thy wrath!

UBALD.

'Tis thou,

Thy cold delay, which goads me to such phrensy.

Say, dearest, thou wilt be my bride to-night.

The priest awaits; thy Ubald kneels to thee. 1470

AGNES.

Ubald, thou wrong'st the chaster thoughts of duty,

Which dare not yield what the weak heart would grant.

I must not hear thee; but the trembling soul

Bleeds to say nay. I may not fly my father.

UBALD.

Then bide, O false one, and be Reynald's victim!—

And yet thou darest not wed him!—Agnes, Agnes,

Thou couldst not yield this hand, thine Ubald's treasure,

And look upon the sun, that lit thy treason.

AGNES.

Indeed I durst not.

UBALD.

Agnes, this hand is pledged

To me and to my fortunes; it was given 1480
In the fair prime and sunshine of our loves,
Which must abide through every change of season,
Not worn as summer garments, to be cast
When ruder hours assail us. Here I hold it
Before the face of heaven, and those pure orbs 1485
Which heard the pledge. I will not loose this hand,
Till at the altar vows assure thee mine,
Though it were parricide to hold it, Agnes.
Thy sire will come! Despair hath wrought me mad.

(Kneeling, and clasping her hand passionately.)

Say thou wilt be my bride! Have mercy, Agnes! 1490
Blood will be spilt ere morn, if thou deniest me.

AGNES.

O Ubald, I am riven by love and duty.
Would that I durst!

UBALD.

O yield thee to my faith!
To say me nay, is to say nay for ever.
Agnes, to-night or never we must wed. 1495

AGNES.

O Ubald, do not tempt me to a deed,
Which shall embitter all our after-joys.
Heaven will not smile on disobedient vows.
My sire will curse us. Spare me, beloved Ubald!
I have not strength to strive against thy wrath. 1500

UBALD.

The priest attends us, love. The solemn rites,
That make thee mine, shall steep thy thoughts in peace.

AGNES.

Dear Ubald, peace can never crown the guilty.
I am too weak, too deeply pledged in love,
To hold that proud demeanor, which I owe 1505
To my own name and to my noble father.
But do not cozen me with empty hopes!
Guilt may have some brief pleasures, great though
anxious;
But peace dwells only in the path of duty.
Make me not, Ubald, what thyself will scorn, 1510
An outcast child!

UBALD.

Would Ubald cause thee sorrow?

In infant years, whene'er thy heart was sad,
And I had been but one day absent, thou
Wouldst rush into mine arms and there pour forth
Thy gentle sorrows, and they straight would vanish.
And wouldst thou place a bottomless gulph between us?
Thou wilt not tear thee from me? Night is waning,
Come, best beloved!

AGNES, (*yielding.*)

I am too weak.

(*Stopping again.*)

Hark, Ubald!

There is an angry whisper of the air,
The shivering trees do rustle with each other. 1520
O tempt me not to ruin, loved, loved Ubald!
Let me once see my sire, and press his knees
With burning tears, that he may spare his child!

UBALD.

Agnes, the word of knighthood duly given

Is law to Sweno. There is now no hope 1525
Save in our instant union. Footsteps move
Through yon dark corridor. Come friend or foe,
Ubold will not resign thee but in death.
Yield, love; despair and death are in delay.

AGNES. (*She leans upon him with a burst of tears.*)

Ubold, I yield me; but my bosom shrinks 1530
With ominous terrors.

UBOLD.

Fear not! Come, dear bride.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Before the Porch of Helen's Chapel. Night.

THE WANDERER, (*alone.*)

Stay, moon, thy rising! When thy conscious eye
Shall pierce the curtain'd east, fate's bolt must fall,

Blurring thy beams with blood. O I am faint,
And gladly would I lay this fever'd head 1535
On the cold ground, and lull my thoughts in death.
The memories of years rise ghastly round me,
And the soul sickens with the sad review
Of all my wanderings. At such an hour
(I mind it now, although the mist hangs often 1540
O'er my benighted mind) those treacherous joys,
That trembled in it like a beam from heaven,
Stole to my heart, foreshowing bliss and rapture;
But, tasted, turn'd heaven to hell, and made this earth
A howling wilderness. O lost delight! 1545
Time was, that I was fair, and blithe, and lovely:
My heart expanded to the God of nature,
And every morning, in my humble bower '
Of woodbine and wild sweets, I pour'd my strain,
Sweet orisons of praise, to him who bless'd me. 1550
Visions of innocence, where are ye fled?
My brain is like a furnace, and the fiend

Goads me to ruin:—yet I dare not waver
Now, on the dizzy gulph of that toss'd ocean
Upon whose brink I stand. But this my cup 1555
Of vengeance will I drink, and then, lost mother,
Thy spirit shall have peace! Blind chaos, come!
O Ubald, O my son! thou art the shaft
Twenty long winters in fate's quiver stored,
And whetted by revenge. I must be brief; 1560
I have upheld thee once; again the pit
Yawns close beneath thy feet, and I have digg'd it.
The hour draws nigh. Yet have I one strong spell
To ward thy ruin, and thou perforce shalt venge me.
[*Exit.*

(*Enter UBALD and AGNES.*)

AGNES.

Stay, best beloved! I heard a voice, dear Ubald; 1565
This place is awful. Let me yet return.

UBALD.

Mine Agnes, cheer thy heart: this loneliness
Is fitting tender thoughts.

AGNES.

Too strongly loved!

My father's curse will blast me. I shall hang
Even as a wither'd wreath upon thy neck, 1570
And thy quick temper will upbraid my sadness.
Perchance thy love, my only prop, will leave me.
Wilt thou not hate my tears?

UBALD.

In mirth or sorrow,
Ever my own! I will make tears my drink,
Ambrosial sighs my food. The very gods 1575
Shall envy me.—Our harbinger of bliss
Peers through her misty shroud. (*The moon rises.*)
So radiant love,
Smiling through tears, shall light mine Agnes' brow.

AGNES, (*clinging close to UBALD.*)

Ubal, who comes?

[*Enter Monk.*]

UBALD.

A friend! our trustiest friend,

Whose blessing, gentle maid, shall seal our union. 1580
Welcome, kind father! These still rocks are lonely;
No eye shall break upon our privacy,
Save yon pure orb, our hymeneal lamp,
That smiles upon us. Though our modest bridal
Must shun the glare of pompous blazonry, 1585
We make thee almoner of this our largesse.
'Tis fit that gifts should crown the church's rites,
And charity draw down a blessing on them.

(Giving him a purse.)

MONK.

'Tis fitting, noble youth: and Father Francis
Hath a right trusty hand, and knows full well 1590
Where to apply this cordial; what souls need
The cheering comfort of thine alms, and where
'Twere cast away, like jewels unto swine.

(aside.)

By our mass, a goodly gift, and well bestow'd!

UBALD.

We are the debtors to your kindness, Father, 1595

And shall not stint our gifts. Bear'st thou the key
Of this lone chapel, through whose color'd pane
The moonlight gleams on the neglected altar,
And chides us for delay?

MONK.

When doth the woodman
Forget his ax, or the true knight his falchion? 1600
And think'st thou Father Francis doth not bear
The weapons of his ministry? This key
Unfolds the portal of that massive arch
Into the shrine; this, at love's witching mandate,
Shall ope the cell beneath it, where is strewn 1605
The bridal couch.

AGNES.

Ubald, I am dismay'd;
The very rocks and chapel frown on us:
The shrine of God looks awful in this gloom,
And my heart's pulse is chill'd. Thou wilt not guide me
Into the bowels of that ruinous den, 1610
Where fiends perchance abide?

MONK.

In truth, fair lady,
Rife is the rumor that these cells are held
By restless spirits, far from human tread;
But trust me, they are jovial souls that haunt them.
I have known somewhat of their pranks myself. 1615
But fear not, lady; spectres come not nigh
This glen to-night, for I have exorcised it.
Nor flesh, nor spirit walks within these doors
Without my leave. Come, lady, to the chapel.

UBALD.

Lean on me, loveliest burthen! Let this arm 1620
Be now, as ever, the sole prop of Agnes.
Thou wilt not fear while Ubald is beside thee.

AGNES.

Forgive me, Ubald, that each breath appalls me:
My fluttering heart beats quick with guilty terror;
I dread this very darkness which befriends us, 1625
The fitful breathing air, and these lone walls,
Lest the mute stones should find a voice to curse me

[*The Monk, who has unlocked the chapel door, pushes it open, after some delay and exertion, with a hoarse grating noise.*]

AGNES *shrieks, and draws back.*

O Ubald, let us turn! Nature forewarns us;
As cautiously we cross'd the forest glen,
Beneath each rustling leaf a tongue seem'd lurking;
And now from out these walls, this ruin'd shrine,
Night's ominous bird will scream and flap his wing
Over our bridal. Turn we, dearest Ubald!
My father will relent.

UBALD.

Gods! am I mock'd?

Shall Ubald be the jest of every slave? 1635
E'en at the altar's groundsill yield my right,
And see insulting Reynald swoop my bride
In his curst talons? Sooner Chaos come!
By heaven, it is not well, it is not well,
To stir my blood thus, Agnes!

AGNES.

Be not angry! 1640

Let not thy wrath destroy me quite with anguish!
What prop, what hope hath Agnes, but thy kindness?
Beloved, forgive my weakness: I am thine;
But, O! what harbor hath the guilty child,
If thou too chide her?

UBALD.

It is tempting fate 1645

To dally thus with time. Pursuit may reach us.
By all the honors I have earn'd and proudly,
I turn not living hence, till thou art mine!

MONK.

I like not this mine office. If the maiden
Decline the church's rite, I take my leave. 1650

UBALD, (*stepping before him.*)

Not so, Sir Priest; stay yet! it were not safe
To rouse the wrath of Ubald. Agnes, Agnes,

Assure this Father of thy free consent!

The sacred gate stands open.

(Taking her hand: she leans upon him.)

Thus, beloved!

Lean thus upon my neck, O thus for ever! 1655

AGNES.

I have not strength to tell my Ubald nay.

*[She enters the Chapel, supported by UBALD,
and followed by the Monk.]*

END OF ACT IV.



ACT V.

SCENE I.

*Night. Before SWENO's Window. THE WANDERER
alone enters cautiously.*

SWENO's voice within.

Bertha!

WANDERER.

His voice! his voice! O tones once dear,
With what dread tremor fall ye on my heart!
O that the space of unrecorded time,
Which has crept slowly, withering hope and life, 1660
Could be annihilate; and days, long sunk
In its devouring gulph, rise fresh and fair!
O Sweno, Sweno, that my soul was chaste
Thy conscience knows; that I was mild and gentle
The cursed triumph of thy fraud bears witness! 1665

That I am hideous now as hell's own inmates,
Blotted from honor's book, disgraced, abandon'd,
That is thy work, thy foul and damning deed.
A stranger sits upon my rightful seat,
The bright throne of my hopes; and here I wander,
Given to the pitying tempests, cast in hate
Forth from my lawful bed, to be the scorn
Of things that howl; while thou, adulterous lord,
Smilest o'er my wreck. The hour of wrath is come,
The plague is o'er thine house. O heavy sleep, 1675
Weigh down the brow of Sweno! seal his lids
In silence, whose next sleep is in the grave!
Sweno, Sweno, I summon thee to death! [Exit.

SCENE II.

SWENO'S Chamber.

SWENO. BERTHA.

BERTHA.

The evening is far spent, and drowsy night

Spreads her still mantle o'er the face of nature. 1680
Sweno, thy mind needs rest.

SWENO.

O gentle Bertha,
The limbs may lack refreshment, but the mind
Hath no sweet pause, while shapeless dread hangs o'er it,
E'en in the lap of sleep. That strange wierd woman
Has cast a withering spell upon my soul, 1685
And her last words ring dreadful in mine ear.
O Bertha! I am sick at heart, and cheerless;
The memory of the past preys keen and darkling
On my deep-burthen'd soul. The curse of her,
Who bann'd us, still pursues me.

BERTHA.

What means my lord? 1690
Have not his firm asseverations made
His Bertha certain, that her wondrous form,
Beauteous in madness, was unknown to Sweno?

SWENO.

And be that added to the bitter sum;

Bertha, my speech deceived thee. Not unknown 1695
Her voice, like fate's last summons, smote my soul.
Still when the tempests rave, and sheeted lightning
Sets the pale vision of her form before me,
That sound appalls my fancy; from above
Retributory vengeance frowns on Sweno. 1700

BERTHA.

Be my lord's thought less gloomy! Twenty years
The sun hath smil'd on us, and all things prosper'd,
As if kind fortune's course outsped thy wishes.

SWENO.

Ay, my loved wife: but heaven's deep wrath delay'd
O'erwhelms with tenfold vengeance.

BERTHA.

. Nay, good Sweno, 1705
Heaven has still joys in store to cheer the evening
Of thy bright glories: thou unbend thy sorrows,
Disclose the bitter secret of thy thoughts,
And let my love assuage them.

SWENO.

Gentle Bertha!

From my youth up I have been proud and fearless.

Bitter must be the pangs which now can wring

Self-accusation from the mouth of Sweno.

But it shall be. Pride wrought the deed that stains

The fair field of my conscience, which yet knows

No other blot: and that dark pride shall stoop 1715

Even to confession of my inward horrors.

I will be henceforth humble, very humble.

BERTHA.

Speak, and be yet my proud and glorious husband!

The evil now abjured, whate'er it be,

Humiliates not.

SWENO.

Was she not fair?

BERTHA.

O yes;

1720

I well remember, on the raving blast,

When her locks stream'd (her beauteous form between
us

And the fire-flashing storm) I could almost
Have bow'd and worshipp'd: but the ban, that flow'd
From her ill-ominous lips in phrensy, spoke her 1725
A maniac or a fiendlike spirit, and say'st thou
Not then unknown?

SWENO.

O Bertha! she was known
Even to the inmost chamber of my heart.
There was a time, if she had ask'd of Sweno
Wealth, fortune, station, character, whate'er 1730
Makes man amongst his fellows vain or glorious,
I had all given and freely; so enshrined
Was her bright image in my soul: e'en now
My fancy views her innocent and lovely,
The temple of pure joys, as first I saw her 1735
Staunching my wounds, while I lay faint and bloodless.

BERTHA.

What wounds? when, where inflicted? say, kind Sweno.

SWENO.

'Twas dusk; alone I journey'd through the forest,
Where the trees leaning from the ruinous steep
Spread their rude canopy o'er a mountain brook, 1740
Then dry and stony. Crossing the ravine,
A bow-shot slew my steed; loud rose the shout
Of rushing men unmerciful. I staid
My back against a rock and kept at bay
The yelling ruffians, when a hand unseen 1745
From the crag's summit smote me, and I fell
Senseless and seeming dead into the hollow.

BERTHA.

Ah me! and none to help?

SWENO.

Yes, there was one,
A shape like heaven's pure spirits, to whom I owe
Life rescued from that deep and bloody trance. 1750

BERTHA.

How came she in that glen?

SWENO.

A cottage, mantled
With flowery sweets, on the lone forest's border,
Gave birth and nurture to her loveliness.
Widow'd, forlorn, though sprung of gentle blood,
Her mother had no joy, no hope, but her; 1755
Yet in that rich indeed. Passing the glen
At earliest dawn to seek their scanty herd,
She found me thus.

BERTHA.

And saved thee! That poor maniac,
Sweno, thy life's preserver! Is it thus?

SWENO.

I tell thee, Bertha, if the slave, that fell'd me, 1760
Had thrust his weapon to the seat of life,
I had died then reproachless, nor thus stoop'd
To strew the ashes of too late repentance
O'er my devoted head. From that long trance
I woke, as by an angel's touch redeem'd. 1765

I had seen nothing on this goodly earth
Like her who stood beside me. Her bright hue,
Her shape, her charms, were in the spring of youth,
With every full-form'd loveliness new-blown;
Of such superior and exalted grace 1770
As woo'd the sense to worship: her dark eyes
Shone with no earthly lustre, proud, yet bashful;
And their glance seem'd to say, " Love me, for I
" Am worth the loving, and can well repay
" With the best bliss of life."

BERTHA.

But thy keen wounds, 1775
How were they staunch'd?

SWENO.

There, where I carried phrensy,
Disgrace, and death! By beauty nursed I wax'd
In health and vigor, while the mind's deadlier fever
Waked hot within. But Elfrid's soul was haughty,
And, when to lawless passion I gave voice, 1780

The flush of indignation crimson'd o'er
Those beauteous cheeks, where love sate still supreme;
And those dark eyes, which seem'd his throne and altar,
Became a killing plague. Stung with desire,
Maddening, I swore, if she would bless my love, 1785
That she should share my name, rank, wealth and
honors.

My oaths prevail'd. O Bertha! I did call
The living God to witness with such strong
And terrible denouncement, that my soul
Shrinks now from the remembrance. I invoked 1790
A curse on me and mine to everlasting,
If I should fail.

BERTHA.

Immortal justice, spare us!

SWENO.

Heaven bears record, how I adored and wrong'd her;
How in brief space those vows, joy-seal'd, were broken.
Health strung my limbs; the prize from thy fair hand

'Mid Christendom's best knights in tourney won
Waked loftier thoughts. Pride scorn'd the lowly gem
Which it had robb'd of lustre. Yet once more
I saw her, mournful, and presaging death,
In her lone bower. I spoke not what I purposed, 1800
But her pale features an expression wore
So sad, and yet so steadfast, that her look
Pierced to my inmost soul, which shrunk beneath it.
Her words were few; but from a harp, o'er which
Oft I had hung in rapture, her white hand 1805
Waked a most wild, and dissonant harmony;
And then a song broke forth, which on my soul
Has sear'd its words in fire; ne'er heard since then,
Till from my Agnes the ill-omen'd notes
Stole on my nerves, like the cold ague's fit. 1810

BERTHA.

Nor seen again? until our nuptial hour,
When the flood whelm'd her.

SWENO.

Never.—That direful music

Was her last parting; nor did I hear reproach,
Save on the morning of her piteous fate
That ominous threat which burst over our bridal: 1815
But here indelible her image dwells,
And shapeless fears appall me.

BERTHA.

Let the balm
Of Bertha's tried affection soothe thy thoughts.

SWENO.

Go, Bertha, to thy couch: myself will follow,
Short space to penitent devotion given. 1820

BERTHA.

Tarry not, my loved lord.

[*Exit* BERTHA.]

SWENO, *alone.* (*He sits down.*)

I know not why,
Or what vain terrors ~~undefined~~ oppress me.
There is no living thing can daunt my strength;
But visions of the past rise thick before me,

And his own secret thoughts quell Sweno's pride. 1825
O sleep, sweet sleep, when will thy balmy wing
Lap me in still forgetfulness, without
Thy fearful train of soul-appalling fancies?
Steal, gentle soother, o'er my troubled spirits!

[*After a pause, the door opens slowly, and THE
WANDERER enters cautiously.*]

WANDERER.

Sweno, awake! Hie thee to Agnes' chamber! 1830
Search the maid's bower! The dainty bird is gone,
The virgin honors of thy house are blasted.
Sweno, arise! or sit thou unrevenged,
Till foul dishonor stare thee in the face
Plain as the sun! Ubald has stolen thine Agnes. 1835
The vaulted chamber under Helen's chapel
Is witness to their loves. There seek, there find them!
Up, Sweno, rise! 'tis Elfrid bids thee wake! [*Exit.*

SWENO.

Are my thoughts crazed, or stood that form before me?

Art thou a phantom from the oozy deep, 1840
Breaking night's stillness with unhallow'd voice,
Or shape of flesh and blood, that warn'st me thus?

The WANDERER, alias ELFRID, without, singing.

The fiend has set his mark
On their heads, dark, dark,
And the spirit of vengeance is near his door. 1845

SWENO.

The voice, the voice, the very tones of Elfrid!
Dread judgment, hang'st thou o'er my fated house?
Not on my child, great God of mercies, not
On my poor Agnes!—Bertha, Bertha, sleeps she
In the sweet rest of innocence unharm'd? 1850
My child, my Agnes, ~~hear me!~~ Bertha! Bertha!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Moonlight. Before the door of the Cavern under Helen's Chapel, which is seen above, and a projecting point of rock still higher. The River on one side appearing to wind close behind the projecting rock. The Monk is seen descending a rocky staircase from the Chapel, followed by UBALD and AGNES. The Monk unlocks the door of the Cavern.

MONK.

Fear nothing, lady, though the bridal couch
Seem lonesome. Evil spirits have no power
Over the chaste. Dread no worse warlock here,
Than him whose mastering spell subdues thy beauty
E'en to his wish and will. Sweet dreams of love
And waking joys attend ye! [Exit.

AGNES.

O, loved Ubald,
What have we done! where has thy passion led me!
My maiden couch untenanted; my mother,

My sire renounced! Will not the curse of heaven
Burst on the rash and disobedient child?

UBALD.

Think not so gloomily! This night was cull'd
From the pure calendar of hallow'd hours
To be our bliss.

AGNES.

Ubal, a solemn blessing
Upon my virgin forehead has just stamp'd 1865
The name of wife. It was my only wish,
And this fond heart, though timid, should be joyous.
Why does fear chill my thoughts? Why hangs a mist
Of vague and shapeless terrors on my soul?
Are they of guilty disobedience born, 1870
Or omens of deep warning? Cheer me, love,
For my strength fails.

UBALD.

No breath of harm shall near thee;
Bid thine eyes beam with joy! Come, gentle Agnes!

AGNES.

Nay, Ubald, stay, and breathe this pleasant air.

See, how the moon rides glorious in yon sky! 1875

From infant years I loved that silver light,

And the unvaried music of the waters,

That glimmer with its beam. Pleasant and calm

Under this rock falls sweetly on the ear

The murmur of the river. Sit we here; 1880

That cave is terrible.

UBALD.

Light of my being,

It grieves thine Ubald's tongue to say thee nay.

Thy flight may be perceived, and hasty wrath

Pour its arm'd scouts around. In that retirement

Secure we rest; and vague pursuit may fret 1885

And spend its breathless speed, but never reach us.

AGNES, (*unwillingly yielding.*)

That cloister's vault is dismal as a tomb. [*Exeunt.*]

(The door closes after them grating heavily.

After a short pause, enters THE WANDERER

ELFRID, cautiously.)

ELFRID.

Ye beetling rocks, and thou, lone chapel, once
Witness of Elfrid's wrongs, behold her triumph!
Haste, Sweno, to thy doom! The chapel closed—
All hush'd—all silent—save this heart, which throbs
As it would burst the impediments of life.
O dreadful!—O my son! Thy reckless passion
Has overleap'd my speed and marr'd thee. Ubald,
Where art thou? Pray this earth to cover thee, 1895
Ere thy rash guilt be blazon'd to the sun!

[A shriek is heard within the cavern.

Hark to that shriek of fear! O vengeful phantoms,
One moment yet be still!—Come, Sweno, Sweno!
I am belated; in my own toils caught,
And wrapp'd in terrors. Sweno! dullard, haste! 1900

(She ascends the stairs, and passes behind the Chapel. After a pause, enter from the cell hastily AGNES, UBALD.)

AGNES.

Night is terrific in that hideous cavern.

UBALD.

Nay, gentle Agnes. These are vain illusions,
The coy fears of a maiden. Hath not Ubald
Power, strength, and will, to shield thee from all danger?

AGNES.

Bear with me, Ubald; 'tis not lack of love, 1905
That scares me from thy couch. The icy hand
Of horror is upon me. I dare not rest
In that tremendous gloom.

UBALD.

Wayward enchantress,
Night hath no darkness where my Agnes is!
Thyself art light, and joy, and loveliness. 1910
Cheer thee, sweet trembler; on thy coral lips

The breath of love is stirring. Thy chaste bosom
Is the dear shrine of bliss. Appease thy fears.

AGNES.

O Ubald! as I near'd that frightful couch,
Lifting its veil with slow and timid hand, 1915
I saw, though in thick darkness, plain and lit
By its own ghastliness, a grinning fiend,
And, shrieking, back I fell. Methought I lay
Wrapt in my shroud and coffin, while around
Glared thousand hideous phantoms as in triumph, 1920
The least too horrible for human gaze.
I tremble, Ubald, and am thrill'd with dread;
For love's dear sake forbear me.

SWENO, (*without.*)

Ubald! ho!

AGNES.

My father! Shield me, Ubald, from his wrath!

[*Enters SWENO with his sword drawn. AGNES
shrinks back towards the rock.*]

SWENO.

Traitor, my daughter!—O my Agnes here! 1925

(To UBALD.)

Glorious requital of parental cares!

Heap, heap dishonor on the house that rear'd thee,

But hope not, caitif, to escape the sword

Of an avenging father. Die, ungrateful!

Perish, base-born seducer! .

UBALD, (*parrying his blows without returning them.*)

Peace, peace, Sweno! 1930

Put up thy sword; Ubald would not offend

One hair of thine for all the wealth of worlds.

Sire of my Agnes, Ubald kneels to thee.

[*He drops on one knee.*]

SWENO.

Kneel not for life! Die, coward, faithless Ubald!

UBALD, (*rising.*)

Thy fury is unmanly. O beware, 1935

Stir not the fiend, which lurking in my heart

Cries vengeance on thine head!—Hold! hold!

ELFRID, (*on the rock above.*)

Thine oath!

Thine oath! Slay him who made thee fatherless!

UBALD.

Tempt me no further, Sweno, on thy life!

I know not if that wizard tongue speaks true, 1940

Which cries that Sweno made me fatherless.

My thoughts grow perilous; there is that within me

Which swells to think that I have lost a father,

And lost by thee. Stand off, or bid good angels guard
thee!

SWENO.

Die, traitor, die! This for my ravish'd daughter, 1945

This for foul breach of hospitable faith.

(UBALD *parries his blows.*)

AGNES.

O father, hold!

BERTHA, (*without.*)

This way, this way! the din

Of swords is loud.

AGNES.

Hold, husband, father, hold !

ELFRID, (*above.*)

Thine oath, thine oath ! Think, Ubald, on thy sire !

UBALD.

The spirit of my parent calls for vengeance ; 1950

Perish, fond thoughts !

(UBALD *at last fights with* SWENO. *Enter* BERTHA, REYNALD, *Knights, and Attendants with torches.* AGNES *at the same moment rushes forward to part* UBALD *and* SWENO, *and receives the point of* SWENO's sword *in her breast. She shrinks back and hangs with both hands on* UBALD's shoulder ; *at the same time* UBALD's sword *strikes down* SWENO.)

AGNES.

O I am sorely hurt !

(UBALD *supports* AGNES. BERTHA *kneels by* SWENO, *and is engrossed with attendance on him.*)

UBALD.

Lean on me ; thus !—Ah me, 'tis thy blood, Agnes.

BERTHA.

O Sweno, Sweno, thy life's fount is gushing.

Thy blood wells fast away ; I cannot staunch it.

ELFRID, (*above.*)

Sweno, look up ! It is thy son, thy son ! 1955

Elfrid's accursed issue sends thy soul

Burning to Hell ! It is thy son has made

That hateful offspring of thy faithless nuptials

As lost, as sunk in infamy, as curst,

As she whose tongue upbraids thee ! Agnes, Agnes,

Despair and perish !——Ubald is thy brother !

UBALD.

O horrible, horrible ! Witch, fury, demon !

There is a lying spirit in thy mouth ;

Thou durst not thus have outraged nature's mercies.

ELFRID.

Mercy for who shows mercy ! Blood for blood ! 1965

Ubald, yon fate-struck caitif was thy sire,
Who cast thee fatherless on this wide world ;
Who murder'd Elfrid's fame, and peace, and reason,
And made me what I am, Hell's slave and victim.
My mother's frantic spirit stands beside him, 1970
Smiling in agony, and calls me hence !
Am I not avenged? Now, now laugh out,
Fiends of dismay! Mix earth, and air, and sea !
Unbind the angels, which have power to slay
When the sixth trump has sounded ! Hell is loose,
And nothing can the fiends of vengeance brew
Feller than this!—O for a whirlwind's blast,
To cover with unfathomable night
The deeds which I have wrought!—My brain is fire.
Welcome, despair, and death, and phrensy, welcome !
Eternal ruin yawns! I come! I come!

(She springs from the rock into the torrent beneath.)

REYNALD.

Tremendous wreck of reason ! O most dreadful !

AGNES, (*in a low voice to UBALD.*)

Cast me not from thee! I am gone, and quickly,
Where they nor wed, nor are in marriage given.
Dying I yet may clasp thine hand. Kind Ubald, 1985
One parting kiss, but pure as angel's greeting!
O hold me up, fast, fast! I swim! I sink!
'Tis sweet to die upon thy bosom, Ubald.

(*She dies.*)

UBALD, (*in a low voice.*)

Speak! gentle Agnes, say thou art not gone!
O still, still, breathless, silent as the grave! 1990

SWENO,

(*whose eyes had continued riveted on the spot where
ELFRID stood, and unconscious of what was passing
round him.*)

Eternal justice, upon me alone,
Not on mine issue, let thy terrors fall!
My life is ebbing fast. Thine hand, loved Bertha!
O Agnes, O my child, my child, where art thou?

Thy voice was ever music to my soul; 1995
Say he is not thy husband! lift the weight
Of that deep anguish, which appalls me dying!

*(BERTHA, who had been kneeling by SWENO without
attending to AGNES, shrieks suddenly on perceiving
that she is dead.)*

BERTHA.

Ah me! she is gone for ever! Sweno, Sweno,
She rush'd between thee and hot Ubald's sword,
To stay the hasty temper of such wrath, 2000
And thine own hand has slain her.

SWENO.

O my child,
If thou wert wedded to that bed of incest,
Thy death is the sweet sleep of innocence,
And life had been a curse! My gentle Agnes,
Fatally hast thou rued one perilous act 2005
Of disobedience to thy guilty sire;
And thou art gone before me!—I am sick

With terrors keener than the pang of death.
Beloved, ill-fated Bertha, thou hast found
In me, who should have been thy stay and glory, 2010
The rock whereon thy hopes have all made wreck.
Ubald, I charge thee, live! though scathed and blasted
By heaven's dread bolt.

UBALD,

(starting from his silent contemplation of the dead
AGNES.)

Who bids that wretch, that once
Was Ubald, live? His fount of life is dried!
My Agnes was the life, the light of Ubald. 2015

(After a convulsive agony of grief, and a pause.)

They say she was my sister, and thou father;
And both are slain—my father by my sword;
And that wierd demon was indeed my mother!
O world, what art thou, but a hell of horrors?
And who bids Ubald live?

(The Knights lay hands upon UBALD to prevent his injuring himself.)

UBALD, *(casting them with violence from him.)*

Unhand me, sirs ; 2020

My wrath is dangerous.

(After a pause, he throws down his sword.)

Yes, I will live.

Ubald will never shrink from fate.—*(He kneels.)* O
father.

Curse me not dying ! At the tomb of Christ
Through blood of infidels my sword shall hew
Its way to pardon ; the bare stone my couch, 2025
The spring my drink, and the hair-shirt my clothing.
No joy, or pride, or hope shall come near Ubald ;
But strict achievement of dire penance cleanse
My desolate soul of parricidal guilt,
And for my bones win peace.

SWENO.

I curse thee not. 2030

Thou art my heir—A solemn contract. . . . I
Destroyed it—I . . . I . . . Farewell—Ubald—Bertha.

(He dies.)

BERTHA.

O bitter fate! O cheerless! in one day
Stript of all joy, more lonesome than the dead!

(To UBALD.)

Monster, this curse shall cling to thee; thy guilt, 2035
Redder than scarlet, shall incarnadine
The banners of the just, and bar them from
The temple of their Savior; and the tomb,
Whose indiscriminate yearning swallows all,
Shall cast thy marrowless unquiet bones 2040
Forth from its paw: no mass or requiem
Shall win for thy gaunt skeleton a place
In the still church's bosom, till the lapse
Of hundred winters shall have hush'd the wail
Of thy remorseful spirit, and earn'd for thee 2045
That rest which death denies the parricide!

(Rising.)

Yet one word, ere we part for ever, Ubald!

Sleeps that fair victim undefiled in death?

UBALD.

The dew of blushing morn has never bathed

A bud of innocence more pure and stainless. 2050

BERTHA.

Swear it! by all the wreck which thou hast wrought,

By all thy hopes of mercy, Ubald, swear it!

UBALD.

God's lightning rive this head already blasted,

If ought my love has dared, which should have call'd

One blush to the pure cheek of virgin meekness! 2055

BERTHA.

Heaven's mercies hover o'er thy head, mine Agnes!

(throwing herself down with her cheek on AGNES.)

Here let me lie, and breathe my last beside thee!

REYNALD.

Ubald, we have been foes, but in this ruin,

As all our hopes, so be our angers buried.
Here let us close as friends. Unto Christ's banner
With thee I vow my strength. Thou, stately offspring
Of the most noble house, soar eagle-like
Aloft, and let the gale, which rived thine eyrie,
But waft thee nearer to thy native heaven.

APPENDIX.

THE groundwork of the foregoing Tragedy originates in a Danish ballad, founded upon circumstances which are said to have occurred towards the end of the fourteenth century. The subject first suggested itself to me in reading a Danish play by Ingemann, which adheres to the traditional story; and at the same time that I observed the most glaring defects in the structure of his drama, it occurred to me that the principal feature of the tradition would furnish a fine tragical subject, if the story were so altered as to give it unity of action and interest. I have adopted thus much of the Danish story. A woman, who had been abandoned by a powerful and illustrious knight, to whom she had borne a son, and had contrived to introduce her infant unknown into his family, returns, after wandering twenty years, still animated with the desire of vengeance, and hoping to accomplish it through the means of her son, whom she finds in the immediate prospect of marrying his sister by another mother, their affinity not being suspected. Upon this foundation I have constructed my drama, with an entire dissimilarity of the subsequent circumstances, and of the conduct and character of the persons, with the exception of the fact that the father falls, as in the Danish story, by the hand of his son, the events which lead to that catastrophe being quite different. In Ingemann's play, the character of the injured

woman is low, and so cold-blooded and atrocious, after an interval of twenty years, that it is quite unnatural; and the part is almost superfluous, for in his drama nothing arises out of her agency which might not have occurred equally without her intervention; and her part, which occupies no considerable space, might perhaps have been totally omitted without disadvantage. The part of Ubald in his play is not less disgustingly atrocious, and the original interest is broken up by his escaping the danger of marrying his sister, through the most extraordinary fickleness, by suddenly falling in love with another lady, disguised as a servant-maid, and murdering his father to prevent his obstructing their union. The improbability also of his father's wife having taken a fancy to him when four years old, in the arms of a beggar-woman, and obtained him from her to bring up with her own daughter, and two illustrious knights being equally desirous of marrying their only daughters to him, is very conspicuous in the Danish play.

In my own view of the proper mode of handling such a subject, I considered that the whole agency of the piece should centre in the revengeful female, that her birth and original claims must be more respectable, that the atrocity of her character must be diminished by the evident influence of derangement in consequence of her wrongs and sufferings, and a notion that the spirit of her mother was calling upon her for vengeance; that it should be relieved by touches of better feeling and agonizing recollections, and such a view of her former loveliness as would not be inconsistent with the general dispositions of her mind. I have been anxious in the conduct of the story to preserve the most perfect unity of interest, but to conceal from the reader the secret upon which the plot hinges, until the last act. By preserving the character of Agnes un-

sullied, I have perhaps sacrificed to feelings of delicacy a portion of the force of tragical effect that might have been produced, but I hope that it will not be found to have been injudiciously diminished. Imagining that the reader may have some curiosity to know the particulars of Ingemann's play, I have added a short abstract of it. In the arrangement of the first scene of this tragedy, I had in my recollection the supper of Macbeth. For the substance of the line—

“ 'Tis a fiend's song; where gat you that foul strain?”

as well as for the general idea of a song having been learnt from the fortune-teller, I am indebted to Ingemann. The verse, “ I dread this very darkness which befriends us,” and the two following lines, are copied from two splendid verses of Euripides,

σκοτὸν φρίσσαι τὸν ξυνεργέτην
Τέρανά τ' οἰκῶ, μή ποτε φθογγὴν ἴοι.

and in the passage which commences

“ Methinks I could outstrip his lazy course”

my thoughts were directed to the following fine lines of the same author:

Ἄτρων διοίμην ἡλίου πρὸς ἀνατολήν
Καὶ γῆς ἐνερθε, δυνατὸς ὦν δρᾶσαι τόδε,
Τῶν θεῶν μεγίστην ὥς ἔχειν Τυραννίδα.

The words “ This is the bodiless spectre,” have reference to Lady Macbeth's “ This is the air-drawn dagger.” Reynald's boast that he had slain a renegade was, I believe, suggested to me by the last speech of Othello; and the words “ Who bids that thing, that once was Ubald, live?” by “ Who calls that wretched thing that was Alonzo?” The ideas in the exclama-

tion of Agnes, "What dost thou meditate? O Ubald, strike not in thy wrath," and in the four lines beginning "In infant's years," were derived from a passage in a Danish prose play called Duveca. The line "Guilt ~~may~~ have some brief pleasures, great tho' anxious," was suggested by a beautiful couplet in Dryden,

"Then with tumultuous joys my bosom beat,
And guilt, that made them anxious, made them great."

If my play contains any more coincidences worth mentioning with other authors, they are accidental, and I am not aware of them. The scene of my drama is removed to an earlier period than that of the tradition.

WILLIAM HERBERT.



ABSTRACT
OF
INGEMANN'S DANISH PLAY
*** CALLED**
LÖVERIDDEREN, THE LION KNIGHT.

THE play commences with a soliloquy by Grimbilda, a fortune-teller, who, in the very outset, destroys all the dignity that might have been given to her character by informing the audience that she is a coalheaver's daughter. She denounces vengeance against Venno, a knight to whom she had borne a son twenty years before, and who had broken an oath "which the powers of darkness had heard," and which was probably a promise of marriage. She says that she is the she-wolf, and her son Ubald the wolf whom she has let loose amidst his domestic flock. Ubald enters, singing a hunting-song. She informs him that when he was four years old, Margaret, the wife of Venno, seeing him a tawny infant in the arms of a beggar-woman his mother, had obtained him from her to educate as her own child: that his mother was burnt for a witch, but that her ghost still walks; that when she meets him again the third time she will tell him who his father is; and she urges him to conclude immediately the marriage which was intended between himself and Joanna, who was the daughter of Venno and Margaret, and consequently his half sister. She leaves Ubald, who departs after a long soliloquy and another hunting-

song. Then follows a very long and tedious scene between Joanna and her father, who are joined first by Margaret and afterwards by Ubald, the sole purport of which is to show that although Ubald and Joanna are deeply attached to each other, they are both uncomfortable and unaccountably uneasy, he from the natural restlessness of his disposition, she from an apprehension that although she loves him she shall never be happy with a man of such a character; for which rational fear her parents rebuke her: but Lady Margaret says she has not yet got all Joanna's wedding-clothes ready, and by way of a put-off, Joanna proposes to him to go to the neighbouring castle of Count Everard and win a golden cuirass, which was to be tilted for the next day, and promises when he returns with it to name the wedding-day. Off goes Ubald in full armour, and leaves Joanna and the old people to prose a little longer. The act closes with a soliloquy of Venno's, expressing remorse for the misdeeds of his youth, for which he says that many have cursed him while he was living in joy.

The Second Act opens with a long conversation in the garden of Everard's castle between his daughter Agnes and her waiting-maid; on seeing Ubald approach, they retire behind the bushes; and after a song and a speech from Ubald, they return, having changed clothes with each other. Ubald immediately falls over head and ears in love with the supposed waiting maid, and is almost uncivil to the pretended lady of the castle, who is personated by the maid, and who leaves him alone with Agnes, saying that he seems to have found what he prefers to her. A scene of courtship follows between Ubald and Agnes, whom he supposes to be the servant; and after her departure a long soliloquy by Ubald, who is a little ashamed of himself. Grinhilda, who has overheard all that passed, comes

in after his departure, and in a few lines says that it is all one whether the catastrophe is brought about by his marrying his sister or proving unfaithful to her. Then follows a scene of songs and drinking between Reinald, Ubald and Knights in the castle. They go out and are succeeded by Agnes and her father Everard, to whom she relates all that has passed between her and Ubald, avowing that she is very partial to him, and is confident he will be victorious in the tournament. The Count is, at first, not very well pleased at her forwardness, but ends with saying "well," and they go out upon the terrace to see the combatants. The scene changes to Venno's house, where Joanna sings to him a song which commences thus, "Ah, stranger knight, can I trust thee? Wilt thou not deceive my heart? Wilt thou here in the cellar live and be dweller with thy little dark girl?" Venno is disturbed, and says aside that it is the song of the coalheaver's daughter, and asks how she learned it. She tells him she learnt it of a beggar-woman, and relates a dream about two men burning coals in a hole, and a frightful woman between them, who was just like that beggar-woman. Venno remains alone, and says that perhaps the beggar-woman was the very person who once captivated him in the coalheaver's cellar; and recollects that she threatened that she would pursue him in the next world if not in this. Grinhilda immediately enters the room, and after a short conversation tells him that Ubald is making love to Agnes at Everard's castle, and laughing treacherously at him and Joanna. Venno takes down an old suit of armour, which he puts on, and goes forth.

The Third Act opens with a long scene between Margaret and Joanna, uneasy at the sudden and disturbed departure of Venno. A messenger, who is sent round to invite company,

but not them, to the wedding of Agnes, informs them that Ubald has been victorious and is to marry her immediately. The scene then changes to Everard's castle, where Ufo, who is angry at his overthrow by Ubald, tells Reinald that Everard's castle belonged to one of Venno's ancestors, who, on account of some dark crime, laid a curse upon the place, and foretold a bloody end to all his race. Next follows a love-scene between Ubald and Agnes, at the end of which Everard questions Ubald concerning his birth, but obtains no information; he then enquires why Ubald has not invited Venno amongst the other guests to the wedding, and is told that Venno is an odd fellow, who does not like to leave his fireside. Agnes asks if it is the same Venno concerning whom there was a prophecy that if his daughter should fall in love, she and her whole family would be destroyed. Ubald goes out hunting. Venno meets and challenges him. He disarms Venno, and gives him in custody to some of Everard's men to be confined in the tower of the castle, as a ruffian who had attacked him. Grinhilda comes to Ubald and asks him why he spared the old man's life, and says she will dance at his wedding in the morning. The scene changes to Venno's prison: his soliloquy is interrupted by Grinhilda without, who tells him that her old love for him is revived, and shows him a hole through which he may escape to liberty and vengeance.

The Fourth Act introduces Joanna disguised as a pilgrim and conducted by a shepherd through Everard's garden. After her departure, Venno enters with a rusty sword, which he says Grinhilda has given him. The scene changes to a supper, with song and mirth, in the castle. Everard is informed by a frightened servant that the ghost of old Venno (the ancestor) has been just seen again near the tower. Ubald will go out to

encounter the ghost. After he is gone, Joanna comes in as a pilgrim and asks Agnes if she has seen an old man with white hair and a drawn sword; and promises to bring her a wedding garland. The scene then changes to the outside of the tower. Ubald goes in with his sword drawn: after which Venno enters, and presently hears Ubald calling him within repeatedly. Venno, bent upon vengeance, rushes into the tower with his drawn sword.

The Fifth Act opens with Agnes telling her father how late and disturbed Ubald returned to her, and that she sat up with him till day-break, when he went out again. Ubald enters; Everard sends Agnes to her chamber, and questions Ubald concerning his disturbed appearance. Ubald admits that he has seen the ghost, and entreats Everard to have the tower walled up immediately. In the next scene Joanna brings the wedding garland to Agnes, who is called by Everard to the wedding. Then follows a duel between Ufo and Reinald, who professes himself friendly to Ubald: after their departure Joanna enters, and is told by Grinhilda that Ubald has murdered her father in the tower. Joanna goes in, and comes out again nearly distracted: the wedding music is heard; Grinhilda gives her a dagger, and tells her to avenge her father. The procession enters; Joanna stops it, accuses Ubald of the secret murder of her father, summons him to answer for it in the next world after a year and a day, and then stabs herself. Agnes is carried out, followed by Everard. Grinhilda enters, tells Ubald that she is his mother and Venno was his father, and departs again. Ubald in his despair is comforted by Reinald, who proposes to accompany him to the Holy land.

Thus ends the play of Ingemann; the story is continued in a ballad, which says that Lady Margaret was sitting one even-

ing alone, when a loud knocking sounded on the door. It was Reinald with the remains of Ubald. He departed, and left a skeleton, which was buried, but the next day it was found standing by the church door. Three times it was buried and as often returned again to the porch, where it remained in spite of all endeavours to remove it, and at midnight its groans and footsteps were always heard in the chapel. A hundred years after, a lady descended from Agnes, in consequence of a tradition, went at night into the church to pray for the repose of the dead body. The skeleton stood at the door and refused to let her go out alive, unless she could obtain his pardon from an old man with white hair and a pale female who stood beside them. She prayed incessantly till they relented, and as she passed out through the church door, the skeleton fell to the ground; and the next day it was buried for ever.

END OF THE WIERD WANDERER.

THE story upon which this Tale is founded is altered from that of Julia de Roubigny. The subject was taken from a general recollection of that interesting little volume, to which I have not had an opportunity of referring. Some important alterations have been intentionally made in the story, and perhaps others inadvertently, as I had no particular wish to adhere to it.

JULIA MONTALBAN.

JULIA MONTALBAN.

SWEET bird of night, that on the loneliest spray
Like an intralled angel pour'st thy lay,
Earth has no strain to match thy plaintive notes,
Whose mournful music on the moonbeam floats.
By thee, all other warbling of the grove 5
Seems heartless; thine the very soul of love.
Some secret tie thro' nature's ample bounds
Unites the sweetest with the saddest sounds;
The eye of sorrowing beauty hath a spell,
Which in its radiance mirth can ne'er excell; 10
And she who stands upon the stormy beach,
Pale as the wave-tost corse which she would reach,

With arms out-stretch'd, rent veil, and streaming hair,
The lovely living statue of despair,
Can more enslave the soul by beauty's power, 15
Than all which sparkling moves in pleasure's hour.
And thee of all the nine alone I woo,
Sad loveliest Muse, to sorrow ever true!
Thee oft entranced my fancy has descried,
Thy stately mien, thy step of graceful pride; 20
The shape of slender mould, the glossy hair,
The forehead smooth, the neck of beauty rare;
The robe of jet that girds thy breast of snow,
Making the whitest bosom whiter glow;
The witching eloquence of thy dark eyes, 25
Where the love-lighted smile half-kindled dies;
And from thy coral lip the melting strain
That makes grief bliss, and lighter pleasures vain.
Long shall the mind's rapt eye enamor'd dwell
On thee, chaste Muse, and own thy powerful spell. 30

From thee my verse proceeds; O be it thine
To fill the fancy, and exalt the line !
Stamp thou thine own bright image on my page,
And it shall live beyond Time's latest age!

Wintry and bleak was the Sierra's brow, 35
And thy black ridge, Cordova, capp'd with snow.
Deep sigh'd the gale; thro' swift-borne clouds, serene
The moonlight stream'd upon that lonely scene,
Silvering the glens beneath; while far and wide
Night's shadows flitted o'er the mountain's side. 40
Full on a cheerless chamber fell its ray,
Where, pale and almost spent, a matron lay.
Mournful her look; upon her bosom prest
Both hands were clasp'd; the breath scarce heaved her
breast.

Fixt upon one, who neither moved nor spoke, 45
Her eyes seem'd heaven's last blessing to invoke.

One painful thought alone appear'd to stay
The parting soul, and crave some brief delay ;
While he, her partner in each earthly care,
Sat chain'd to grief, and conquer'd by despair. 50
Behind stood one, whose mien some pity wore,
And, though unblest his office, still forbore ;
By his sad prisoner, waiting for the close
Of life's last scene in that abode of woes.
E'en the hard hand of justice dared not strive 55
To break that tie which nature soon must rive.
Nor long the pause ; her glass was nearly run,
Her limbs unnerved, her strength almost foredone.
'Tis said, strong wishes can in Death's despight .
Arrest the spirit and deny his right ; 60
But soon the spell must pass ; without a groan
Her weak pulse ceased ; that last desire was gone.
Then rose the shriek of one, to whom the view
Of death, and the heart's agony were new,

Her own sweet Julia ; she, who o'er her bed 65
Had watch'd desponding, and now saw her dead.
Each moment had foretold it: but that grief,
So sure and present, now was past belief.
Say ye, who early o'er a mother's grave
Have seen the plumed pomp of burial wave, 70
How oft your fancy unconstrain'd by wo
Has seem'd to hear her cherish'd accents flow!
View'd her loved couch, void room, or wonted chair,
And almost thought to see her image there!
Perchance that incredulity of grief 75
To desolation brings some faint relief,
Deludes the pang, and soothes the youthful heart
With that fond hope from which it will not part.

Sweet childhood, in the lap of kindness rear'd,
How are thy careless sports by love endear'd! 80
Thine is the love, that knows no timid blush,
The heedless brow, which changeful pleasures flush;

The gentle confidence, that fears no harm ;
The breast, which gaily throbs without alarm !
O that thus manhood could securely sail 85
On the smooth tide adown life's pleasant vale !
O that the dreams of childhood could remain,
When years steal on, and reason grows with pain !

Joys cheerful as the spring had o'er the head
Of infant Julia their best influence shed. 90
There was a light of mirth in her blue eyes
The liquid azure of her native skies ;
And the free ringlets of her glossy hair,
Like wanton tendrils, deck'd her forehead fair :
Her cheek was radiant with the hue of joy, 95
Unmixt enchantment, hope without alloy.
Young Roderic, by her parents' bounty rear'd,
Her toils partook, and every sport endear'd ;
Together did their opening minds explore
The sage's precepts, and the poet's lore: 100

So closely link'd in infantine delight,
They were but happy in each other's sight.
No tremulous thought (if such they knew) of care,
No bliss had one, the other did not share.

Time fled too swiftly, bearing in its flight 105
Those precious days of sunshine ever bright.
The sylphlike form grew ripe with woman's charms,
The bosom throb'd with undefined alarms ;
That eye of cloudless mirth now veil'd its gleam,
And bashful mildness shed a gentler beam. 110
The hour of parting came, and keenly proved
To each pain'd breast how tenderly it loved.
E'en then Rodrigo dared not own the fire
Of his full mind, or speak his rash desire.
Call'd in youth's morning to a foreign clime, 115
He then first learnt that poverty was crime.
A noble orphan by Velasquez fed,
His lot seem'd cast to press a barren bed ;

Till wealth, hard-earn'd by toilsome length of years,
Should raise him to a level with his peers. 120
Forth he must fare, where fortune's smiles invite,
While richer suitors woo his lost delight.
But though that pang had well nigh forced the blood
From his life's fountain, still it was withstood.
Love spoke in the flush'd cheek; it lit the eyes; 125
It pour'd the soul's strong passion in its sighs;
But, unrecorded by one daring word,
Its vows were breathed in silence, and unheard.
To Cuba's coast he went, and with him bore
A mind as ardent to that burning shore. 130

But Julia, from Valentia's beauteous vale,
With mournful eye beheld his gliding sail.
Her troubled bosom heaved; a busy thought
Rose in her heart, by treacherous fancy brought,
Which murmur'd painful doubts within her breast 135
Of cold unkindness or of love suppress.

In him had all emotion seem'd to sleep;
She long'd to fall upon his neck and weep;
There was reserve and pride in his adieu;
And something to her feelings strange and new ; 140
And yet, before he bounded from the strand,
His quick convulsive grasp had press'd her hand;
And one last look seem'd rashly to confess
What the proud soul had labor'd to repress.
She gazed upon the flowers, whose laughing birth 145
Show'd as if bliss alone were upon earth,
The trees in stateliest beauty round her growing,
The sea so clear, the hills with sunshine glowing,
And the unclouded firmament on high,
The pure immeasurable depth of sky; 150
She thought the world untenanted and lone,
And she amid that bliss the only one,
The lorn, the hopeless. He, whose breath had given
To earthly joys a sweet foretaste of heaven,

Was floating fast upon the perilous wave 155
To other climes, perchance a foreign grave ;
And there was none beside to understand
The voice that whisper'd from sky, sea, and land,
The secret charm which on the breeze's wing
Stole on each sense from nature's blossoming. 160

Time pass'd, and yet arose no livelier view ;
Her eye its lustre, her cheek lost its hue.
Why was she sad ? She knew not ; this alone
Her bosom felt, that all its mirth was flown.
But soon a weightier blow, substantial care, 165
Made her of that grief's vanity aware.
Man little prizes what each day bestows,
While fancy builds a frightful pile of woes ;
Till, reft of joys that were his daily food,
He learns by loss that what he held was good. 170

The wheels slow rolling thro' Valentia's walls
Bore her for ever from her native halls.
Law, like a harpy, with its ravenous train,
Had stripp'd her father of his rich domain ;
Remote from splendor, in a lonely dell 175
Hard by the dark Sierra doom'd to dwell.
There yet one humble mansion own'd him lord,
But sorrow scowl'd upon his frugal board.

O sweet Contentment, what art thou, and where?
In what wild covert is thy tangled lair, 180
That man can never reach thee? Dost thou dwell
In the low cabin or the rocky cell,
Or lay thee stretch'd beneath some gilt alcove,
Where perfumes breathe and music whispers love?
Art thou the proud concomitant of wealth, 185
The prize of beauty, or the child of health?

Say, dost thou lavish in the peasant's cot
Thy cherub smiles to cheer his rugged lot,
And are the rich, the honor'd, and the gay,
In fruitless search for ever doom'd to stray? 190
Or, still to place and fortune unconfined,
Is thy sole harbour in the peaceful mind?
Those vales are fair, those hills are evergreen,
The careless rustic joys that lovely scene.
Why does Velasquez scorn his humble hall? 195
Why is the bread, that daily feeds him, gall?
Save that, regardless of what sweets remain,
His bosom turns unto the past with pain.
Two years dragg'd slowly on with heavy wing,
And Julia's fondness could no comfort bring. 200
Peevish and doubly jealous of respect,
He seem'd past hope, and all his pleasures wreck'd,
The wife, who with him trod the summer ways
Of fortune, sooth'd him in his wintry days.

Watch'd o'er his fretful mood with patient love, 205

Too sad to cheer, too gentle to reprove.

Grief was young Julia's portion, and she seem'd

As one who woo'd not pleasure, but had dream'd

Unutterable bliss, whose radiance spread

Peace in her soul, to worldly wishes dead: 210

But still her pensive smile might cast a shade

On Seville or Valentia's sprightliest maid;

And, as if born to deck some higher sphere,

She trod life's walk with little hope or fear.

For all her griefs were certain; in her sire 215

The mind's adversity had quell'd its fire;

Her mother, stricken by that helpless doom,

Look'd to the peaceful haven of the tomb;

And he had vanish'd as a morning dream,

Who held the dearest place in her esteem. 220

Herself, that lightsome child of infant mirth,

Was now a thing too sainted for this earth;

Like those pure sylphs, that bend in mild distress
Over the couch of dying loveliness;
And, school'd in that unfriended house of wo, 225
Sate patience, like a glory, on her brow.

But painful scenes drew nigh: fate had not shed
Its utmost malice on Velasquez' head.
E'en on that night of mourning, while his wife
Still press'd the fatal couch, just reft of life, 230
Stern justice dragg'd him from his gloomy home,
To linger cheerless in a living tomb.
Young Julia shared his doom, content to dwell
A self-devoted victim in his cell.
There, spiritless as the corse which he had left, 235
Disease assail'd him, of all hope bereft.
His pallet was of straw, and Julia hung
O'er his uneasy sleep. Carelessly flung
On her white bosom, the dishevell'd hair
Made her more beauteous even in despair. 240

She sate entranced, while memory round her drew
Forms of the past in long and sad review.
In her heart graven with unerring truth
She traced each pastime of her earliest youth;
And in that dungeon, free and unconfined, 215
Valentia's charms came beaming on her mind;
Rodrigo's smile; the mutual joys and fears
Which had endear'd him in her infant years;
And then the clouded brow, the constrain'd look;
The pleading eye, when that last leave he took; 250
The hasty pressure of her yielded hand;
The barque, that bore him from his native land.
Next rose the grief, that reft her of her home,
Torn from the shades where once she loved to roam;
Her mother's failing strength, her kind caress, 255
Foreboding thoughts which she would fain repress;
The paleness that betray'd life's dwindling flame,
The slow decay of that exhausted frame.

Then keener thoughts arose; the pang, that prey'd
Like poison on her heart, to none bewray'd; 260
The tale, which dagger-like had smote her soul,
"Rodrigo wedded to a rich Creole."
Faithless she fain would hold him, and forsworn;
Was not his image in her bosom worn?
Had she not scorn'd for him all wealth beside, 265
Montalban's rank, Montalban's honest pride?
But of reproach the comfort was denied;
How had he woo'd her? by what promise tied?
Her tears stole slow, and that heart-humbling thought
To its sad home her sickening memory brought. 270
Her eyes were fixt upon her father's face,
On which despair had stamp'd its fatal trace.
Its hue was alter'd, and approaching death
Was almost striving with his smother'd breath. 274
Her heart was well nigh bursting, as she saw 275
His grey hairs sunk upon that couch of straw.

Deep self-reproof assail'd her; and a pang,
That did arouse her, through her bosom rang.
Her mother's limbs on the unhonor'd bier
Lay among strangers; and the hoary sire 280
Seem'd to upbraid her heart, which, for the toy
Of fancy lavish'd on a reckless boy,
Had scorn'd the good, the glorious, and the brave,
Whose name might honor, and whose wealth might save.
She had forbid Montalban, though her mind 285
Esteem'd him best and noblest of mankind.
How now recall him? how her wish unfold,
And seem to sell her loveliness for gold?
She look'd upon her father, and his fate
Smote her deep conscience, but it was too late. 290
She gazed, and even then steps hurrying broke
His unrefreshing sleep, and he awoke.
His debts were cancell'd; but the call in vain
Of freedom roused him, and he stirr'd with pain.

Then pale and half-upraised, with earnest look 295
Foreboding death, his Julia's hand he took.

“ One friend alone,” he said, “ of human kind
“ Sought me when fallen, to my failings blind ;
“ And, proud himself, yet strove to be allied
“ To me, who, wreck'd in fortune, still had pride. 300
“ The secret bounty, which unbars my chains,
“ Flows from that fountain, and the debt remains.
“ One gift I have ; one only can repay
“ The heart-felt boon, and that vast debt outweigh.”

He ceased ; she hardly felt the young blood rush
Suffusing o'er her face the kindled blush,
Or how each nerve was to the utmost bent,
While hastily she pour'd her rash consent,
Her thoughts were so exalted ; and her voice
Declared the boon she granted was her choice. 310

'Twas all Velasquez' lingering soul required;
Smiling he bless'd their union, and expired.

Montalban's prime was past, and days of ruth
Had cast some painful cloud upon his youth,
Which left a sad impression; and his mind 315
Was proud and lofty, but his feelings kind.
Adversity, the bane of blither cheer,
To him had made Velasquez doubly dear;
And, scarce perceived, young Julia's influence stole
With unresisted empire o'er his soul. 320
Once fixt love's altar there, it was a power
Which sway'd his passions, rooted in its core.

O thou stern god! imperious, fearful Love!
In thy deceitful cradle as a dove,
Thou in thy might dost like a giant move! 325
Thro' the wide universe thy strength is spread,
And nature quivers underneath thy tread!

Whether thou art of hell or child of heaven,
To thee on this our world all power is given.
Blest author of delight, and yet our bane! 330
All bliss, all guilt, are mingled in thy reign.
Thy steps are viewless as the lapse of time,
And lead the soul from ecstasy to crime.
Thy lip thou clothest with an angel's smile,
Lord of each dearest charm that can beguile; 335
And thou dost lure the wretch thou wilt destroy
With such sweet rapture, that to fall is joy.
But, in thy passion roused, thou art of might
To make man's essence shrink before thy sight.
Thy look, which late with mildest beauty shone, 340
Shall like a gorgon turn his heart to stone;
Murder, and Rape, and Phrensy rise from hell,
And the whole host of Sin obey thy spell.

The sunbeams dawn'd upon their bridal bed,
The bed of mourning for her parents dead; 345

But half her sorrows were not yet fulfill'd,
Her pulse of anguish never might be still'd.
A letter came; she paused; her eyes grew dim,
The characters confusedly seem'd to swim.
Rodrigo's hand, Rodrigo's heart was there: 350
Read on, thou wretched victim, and despair!
Deep blush'd her cheek, but next a pallid hue
Death's veriest semblance o'er her features threw;
For her unheard beyond the Atlantic main,
His faithful wishes had been breathed in vain; 355
For her, though hopeless, and to fate resign'd,
The proffer'd hand of wealth he had declined.
Now lavish fortune his firm truth repaid,
And a rich heritage his will obey'd.
Again elate he trod the Spanish shore; 360
He came to sue; he came to part no more;
And high in hope, in ignorance still blest,
Unveil'd the rapturous passion of his breast.

Her pain'd heart shrunk: she met Montalban's eye;
The blush return'd, and she suppress'd a sigh: 365
Then c-huddering started, and in haste conceal'd
The dangerous scroll, too dear to be reveal'd.
Tears had full scope within her secret bower,
And love resistless re-usurp'd its power.
Life was her bitterest burthen; but she stood 370
In her uprightness firm and unsubdued.
She dared not see Rodrigo: with the thought
Of what she was, her feelings were distraught.

Then came another scroll; Rodrigo's ear
Had learnt her fate, had nothing left to fear. 375
How had he found her! to what fate consign'd!
Not in the grave; they might have there been join'd!
But spoil'd and fetter'd in a rival's bed,
More lost to love's embraces than the dead!
Few words on that ill-omen'd scroll were traced, 380
Few, but with passion's burning touch impress'd.

By every joy which they had hoped or known,
She was adjured to meet him once alone.
From her she cast it shrinking and afraid,
Then bending meekly to her God she pray'd; 385
And sadly strengthen'd in her purpose rose,
Firm in her duty, calm amidst her woes.

There is a spirit in each gloomiest wild,
To love allied, lone fancy's shadowy child;
And he, who mourns beneath the oak's broad arms,
Hath strange society with nature's charms.
The tangled brake, the waters still and clear,
The rock's deep shade, are to his humor dear;
Far from wealth's canopy and burnish'd dome
The interminable forest seems his home; 395
E'en the hoarse voices of the wave and wind
Speak a known language to his troubled mind;
In every moss-grown trunk he hails a friend,
And nature's rudest forms some solace lend.

Julia's cheek glow'd with fever; all her frame 400
Was parch'd and quivering with an inward flame.
She loath'd her chamber, and oppress with heat,
Sought the cool garden's loneliest retreat.
Had Roderic named that place, she would have fled,
Rather than meet him, to her bridal bed; 405
Yet, by some strange mischance, the mourner found
E'en there the man whom she would most have shunn'd.
She wish'd to fly, but trembling (as her feet
Denied their office) sank upon the seat.
She would have bade him leave her, but each word 410
Died on her lips unfinish'd and unheard.
She would have struggled with the hand that squeezed
Her hand, which it had passionately seized;
But powerless, witless, on his neck she fell
With such a burst of sorrow, as might tell 415
The agony which swell'd within her breast,
Too strong to yield, too big to be repress.

Montalban sought her at the fall of day;
The fatal scroll upon her pillow lay. .
He saw; he read.—A sudden film came o'er 420
His sight amazed—he judged not—he forbore.
With hasty voice he call'd, enquired her path,
And follow'd, more in wonder, than in wrath. .
Just when broke forth her sorrow's welching flood,
With startled horror by the seat he stood; 425
Where Julia, clasp'd in young Rodrigo's arms,
Sob'd on his bosom, heedless of her charms,
While the full soul seem'd pouring thro' his eyes,
And his delighted spirit drank her sighs.
Enough, enough—O too much had he seen! 430
O that impervious gloom had wrapp'd the scene!
Backward few steps he stagger'd, both hands clasp'd
Upon his forehead, and for breath he gasp'd.
Him they observed not, by one grief possess'd
And in that throb of torment almost blest. 435

Rodrigo ask'd but that one sweet farewell,
That solace in despair, and he would dwell
In wilds untrodden, of all joy forlorn,
And waste a life too blasted to be borne.
But Julia's heart was rived; she could not speak: 440
He press'd his burning face against her cheek,
And from that trance she started;—one farewell,
One sad eternal parting! and the spell
Dropp'd from her eyes: stood sinful love unveil'd
In full deformity, and faith prevail'd; 445
As homeward like a panting dove she flew,
Scared from the peril of that last adieu.

Four things the wise man* knew not to declare,
The eagle's path athwart the fields of air;
The ship's deep furrow thro' the ocean's spray; 450
The serpent's winding on the rock; the way

* PROVERBS, c. xxx. vv. 18, 19.

Of man with woman.—Into water clear
The jealous Indian rudely thrust his spear,
And, quick withdrawing, pointed how the wave
Subsided into stillness. The dark grave, 455
Which knows all secrets, can alone reclaim
The fatal doubt once cast on woman's fame.
Night's shade fell thick; the evening was far spent
Ere proud Montalban to her chamber went.
Slowly he enter'd, and with cautious glance 460
Cast his eye round, before he did advance.
A bowl half fill'd upon the board he placed,
And with brief speech his sorrowing bride address'd:

“ The night advances, Julia: hast thou pray'd

“ To Him whose wrath is round the sinner's bed? 465

“ Yes, honor'd Albert,” the sad wife replied,

“ The heart is frail by mortal passions tried;

“ The voice of God is awful, when the breast
“ Of the weak sufferer is by guilt opprest;
“ But mercy dawns upon the patient head, 470
“ The peace of Him who for our failings bled.”

He fix'd upon her face a silent look
Of ~~utter~~ misery, and then sternly spoke.

“ If morn's first ray must glimmer on our bier,
“ Couldst thou envisage death without a fear? 475
“ Are thy thoughts chasten'd, Julia? canst thou go
“ With me before the throne of bliss or wo?”

His firm voice falter'd; but the dismal word,
E'en as fate's warning, by his bride was heard.
His cheek was like the hue of one long dead; 480
But his lip quiver'd, and his eye was red;
And such dark feelings character'd his gaze,
That Julia shrunk with terror and amaze.

She paused; her eye fell doubtful on that bowl;
O'er all her frame a shuddering horror stole. 485
Then thus with downcast look; (she dared not raise
Her eye to meet again that fearful gaze:)

“ Yes, Albert; I have made my peace with heaven,
“ At whose pure shrine my secret thoughts are shriven.
“ Whene'er fate calls, this humble soul obeys; 490
“ The tear of sorrow asks no fond delays.
“ With tremulous hope the lingering heart may move
“ Thro' life's blest walks, illumed by blissful love;
“ Cold duty's path is not so blithely trod,
“ Which leads the mournful spirit to its God.” 495

She spoke, half timid, and presaging ill
From his knit brow and look severely still.
The thought of death came o'er her; and the mind
Disown'd her words, more fearful than resign'd.

Love's secret influence heaved the conscious breast 500
With fluttering pulse, that would not be at rest.
Stern Albert mark'd the tremor of her brow,
And the cheek's fitful color come and go.
His eye was big with anguish, as it stray'd
O'er all the charms, which her thin robe betray'd, 505
The perfect loveliness of that dear form
In its full spring of beauty ripe and warm;
And never had she look'd so worth his care,
So sweet, so graceful, so surpassing fair,
When the pure glow of innocent delight 510
Flush'd her young cheek and sparkled in her sight,
As languid, in that careless garb array'd,
Half lit by the pale lamp, half hid in shade.
He would have given his very life to kiss
Those lips by beauty moulded for his bliss, 515
Once more in tenderest rapture to have press'd
That shape angelic to his troubled breast;

But pride forbade, and from each living charm
Drew fiercer hate, which love could not disarm.
Upon that form of beauty, now his bane, 520
Seem'd foul pollution to have fixt its stain.
Awhile he paced the floor with heavy stride,
Then gazed once more upon his sorrowing bride;
And, parting with his hands the glossy hair
On the white forehead of the silent fair, 525
Look'd wistfully; then, bending sad and slow,
Fix'd one long kiss upon that brow of snow.
It seem'd as if love's spirit in his soul
Was battling with his passion's fierce control.
He sat before her; on one hand reclined 530
His face, which told the struggle of his mind;
The other held the bowl: she raised her head,
As, slow his hand extending, thus he said;

“ Drink, Julia; pledge me in this cup of peace;
“ Drink deep, and let thy tears of sorrow cease.” 535

Her eye was fixt and motionless; her cheek
Had lost its changeful hue; she did not speak.
Her nerves seem'd numb'd, and icy horror press'd,
Like a cold weight of lead, upon her breast.

“ Drink, Julia;” spoke again that dreadful voice, 540
“ Drink, Julia, deep; for thou hast now no choice.”

A fatal shiver seem'd to reach her soul,
And her hand trembled, as it touch'd the bowl;
But duty's call prevail'd o'er shapeless dread;
She look'd with silent terror, and obey'd. 545
I know not, whether it was fancy's power
Which smote each conscious sense in that dread hour,
(But he half started, and in truth believed
That a deep lengthen'd sob was faintly heaved,
And some dark shuddering form behind him pass'd, 550
Which o'er her shape its fearful shadow cast,)

Or whether, doom'd at mortal guilt to grieve,
Thus his good angel sadly took his leave.
Breathless he listen'd, by his thoughts appall'd;
(The hour of mercy could not be recall'd.) 555
Then to his lips in turn the draught applied,
Which should in death unite him with his bride.

'Twas done; a long, still, solemn pause ensued,
And Albert speechless his sad victim view'd.
There was not in her chamber sound or breath, 560
But all was hush'd and ominous of death;
The very lustre, which the dim light shed,
Was like a watchfire burning by the dead.
The darksome tapestry heaved not on the wall,
And like night's spectres stood its figures tall; 565
They seem'd in shadowy stillness to survey
The twain illumed by the lamp's pallid ray:
And Julia, half suspicious of her fate,
Mark'd the stern aspect of her ghastly mate.

At length with solemn voice Montalban broke 570
That awful silence, and more mildly spoke.

- “ The hour of thy deceitfulness is past;
“ Our lives are waning, and the die is cast.
“ Let thy mind turn from frailty, and the heart
“ Unveil its bitter secret, ere we part. 575
“ But first, O Julia, once my hope and pride,
“ By thine own voice let Albert's deeds be tried,
“ Sad memories of earlier years may lend
“ My brow a gloom which fondness should unbend:
“ Perchance it wants the soft and winning grace, 580
“ The smiling vermeil of a younger face;
“ But in what chaste endearment couldst thou find
“ Or love more warm, or kindness more refined?
“ Have not my cares, with anxious pleasure fraught,
“ Outsped thy wishes and forerun thy thought? 585
“ Speak thou my sentence; this lorn heart appeals
“ To thine own thoughts and what thy conscience feels.

" O in thy treason, Julia, madly prized
" Above all joys which ever love devised,
" Even in thy guilt so excellently fair, 590
" 'Tis bliss to gaze on thee in this despair!
" Speak, thou frail angel! be in death forgiven!
" That sinful breast is Albert's only heaven!"

He stopp'd; the whelming passion of his soul
Rose like a deluge, bursting pride's control; 595
Full swell'd the tide of agonizing grief,
And in deep sobs his suffering forced relief.
On either hand with strength he press'd his brow,
Torn by remorse his lips would not avow.
Julia rose quick and startled; she had heard 600
With strange amazement each appalling word.
Her mind was troubled, but she dared not think
That the sad peace of death was in that drink.
How could she dread from him that deed of hell,
Who, to her sorrow, had but loved too well! 605

Yet conscious thoughts awoke some secret fear;
The deep reproof fell painful on her ear:
For the weak heart, tho' pure of guilt within,
Still nourish'd wishes which to think was sin.

“ Forbear, my lord,” the trembling mourner cried,
“ Forbear, nor deem thus harshly of thy bride! 615
“ Thou wilt not kill me? I have chastely worn
“ The bonds of duty, and am not forsworn.
“ O Albert, thou didst take my hand alone,
“ And all I had to yield thee is thine own! 620
“ Fond love is wayward as the mountain flower,
“ Which blooms spontaneous in its rocky bower;
“ Spreads its pure incense on the fitful gale,
“ Which fans the cradle where it wills to dwell:
“ But sickening pines beneath the hand of care, 625
“ And breathes no sweets but in its native air.
“ If some vain thoughts and youthful dreams arise,
“ Forgive the tears, that trembling veil my eyes.

- “ The struggling soul shall every wish subdue;
“ Thy mournful Julia to her vows is true. 625
“ Believe me, Albert, though the suffering mind
“ Pour some weak sighs, the spirit is resign'd.
“ No thought lurks there, which needs to be forgiven;
“ All that of life remains, to thee is given.”

- “ Short space, dissembler!” wrathful Albert cried;
“ Think'st thou, that night thy guilty loves can hide?
“ Rodrigo!—Traitor, does the color rise
“ To those white cheeks, which thy calm speech belies?”

A sudden blush o'erran her ivory cheek,
As thus with tremulous voice she strove to speak. 635

- “ Thou wrong'st me! e'en now, exiled from his land
“ By hapless love, he seeks a foreign strand.”

" 'Tis false," said Albert, and his brow grew dark;
 " The moonlight gleams upon him cold and stark."

Uprose the wrathful husband; as he stood, 640
 The lamp's ray shone upon the clotted blood
 Staining his garment, and the baleful glow
 Of such fierce passion lighten'd from his brow,
 That Julia shriek'd, as if his vengeful arm
 Had spilt before her eyes the life-blood warm 645
 Of him her soul adored. A dizzy pain
 More sharp than death shot keenly thro' her brain.
 And " Hast thou kill'd him, Albert?" loud she scream'd,
 Gazing where on that blood the lamp still gleam'd.
 " I thank thy jealous rage; thro' all my veins 650
 " I feel thy fatal draught and deathlike pains,
 " The last fell gift of mercy to thy bride,
 " First of thy love, now victim of thy pride. ✱
 " I do not curse thy ptrency! Canst thou bear ✱
 " Of thine own soul the weight and deep despair? 655

" Albert, I do not curse thee for the slain !

" Two hopeless spirits thou hast loosed from pain."

She said, and sunk in anguish on the floor,
Her white hands wildly clasp'd, to rise no more;
And never did a child of earthly woes 660
Such loveliness in hour of death disclose.
Her eyes upon the fretted ceiling fix'd
A look of hope with such sharp suffering mixt,
That the pure soul seem'd striving thro' the sight
To find its God, and win its way to light. 665

Thy thoughts of joy, Montalban, all are past;
And this still hour of murder is thy last!
But canst thou gaze unmoved upon that form?
Those youthful limbs are beauteous yet and warm;
The eyes, which sparkled once with free delight, 670
Speak yet the feeling soul, and still are bright;
But thy swift poison spreads thro' every vein,
That tender shape must writhe with inward pain;

Cold and unconscious shall that blushing face,
Which met thy love, lie sunk in death's embrace; 675
The unzoned breast, which heaves so smooth and white,
Shall be ere morning loathsome to the sight.
Gaze, gaze, thou rash despoiler, till thine eyes
Grow dim with grief, and thine heart burst with sighs!
For thou hast madly dash'd away in scorn 680
That gem of beauty which thou might'st have worn;
Thou hast destroy'd the loveliest of the fair;
Canst thou behold thy work and not despair?

The morn dawn'd glorious upon vale and hill,
But Julia's chamber was all hush'd and still. 685
The noonday's sultry beam gilt spire and tower,
But no sound stirr'd within her peaceful bower.
Its casements close remain'd in quiet gloom;
Its dark alcove was silent as the tomb.
At length strange whispers ran, that voice or word 690
Was not return'd by Julia or her lord;

That one who pass'd the garden's private door
Had found a fair youth slain and stiff in gore:
And some within had listen'd with affright
Sounds like last agonies at dead of night: 695
The bodeful tale grew rife, and at late hour
With anxious fear they burst the nuptial bower.
There, all untenanted the bridal bed,
Upon the floor the twain were stiff and dead.
Loved Julia lay, upon her graceful arm 700
The cheek reclined, as if in life yet warm;
But cold death's livid hue upon her skin
Show'd what a piteous waste was wrought within.
Her features seem'd, tho' now in slumber deep,
After some painful struggle sunk to sleep. 705
The aspect of her lip serene and mild,
Perchance death's last convulsion, sadly smiled.
Montalban's strength appear'd more lately spent;
O'er her pale corse his lifeless form was bent,

And inward agony still seem'd to strain 710
His ghastly features, as if wrung by pain.
His bloody glove, yet clench'd, appear'd to press
The hand of that fair victim to his face ;
As if, deep striving with his latest breath,
His lips convulsed had clung to it in death. 715
His throes were strong and fierce; and he, that slew
That form of loveliness, had most to rue.
Her soul to bliss, awaken'd from despair,
In mild forgiveness pour'd its latest prayer;
It breathed no thought, which angels would deny; 720
A beam of glory lit her dying eye:
The patient spirit from its frail abode,
By faith upraised, stole gently to its God.

FINIS.

